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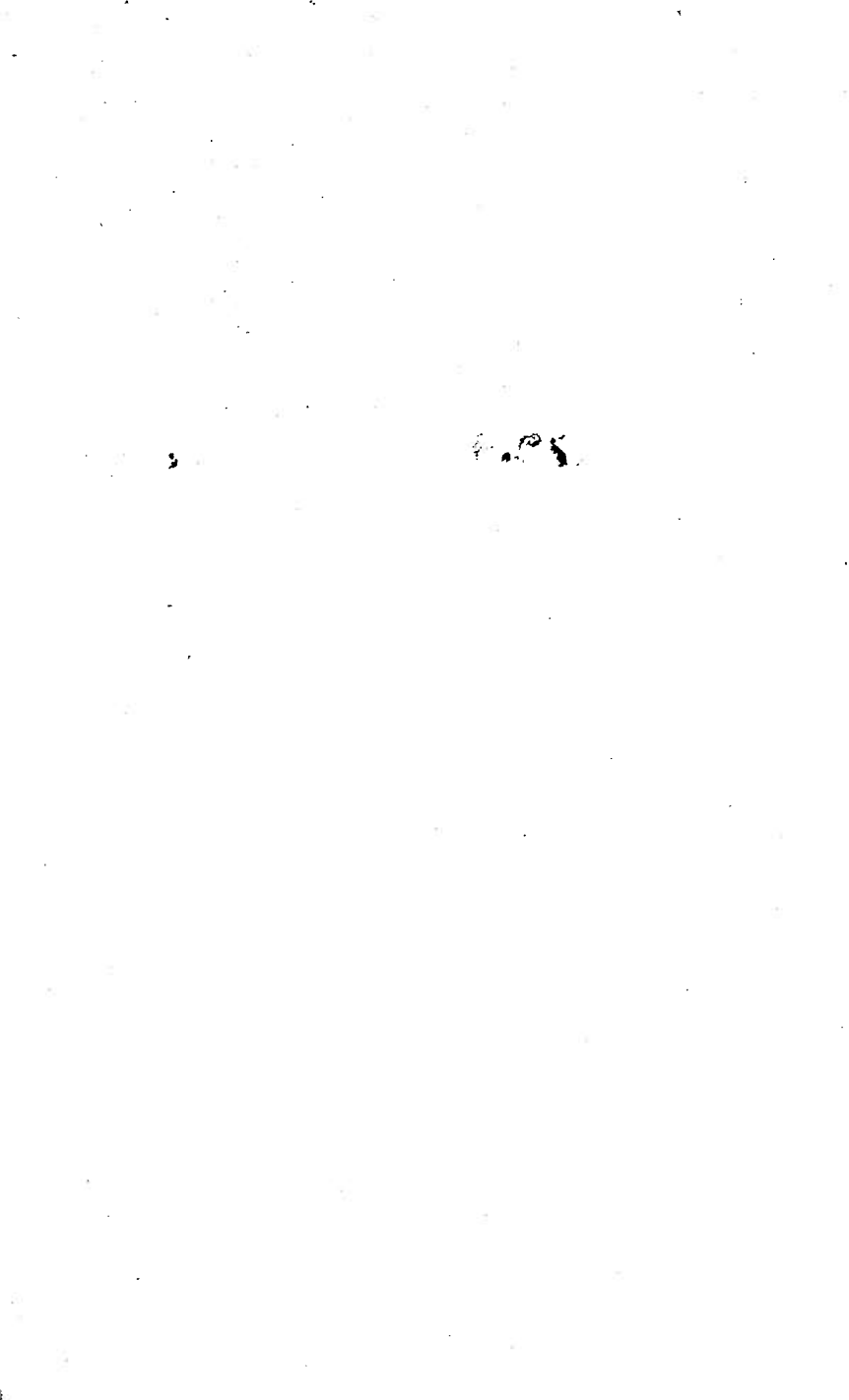
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INTRODUCTORY.

To the ordinary Christian as well as to the riper scholar, the book of the Acts of the Apostles must ever be an interesting portion of the word of God. To the student it has offered a rich field for studious thought and extensive research. Much patient study and careful investigation have been expended on this fascinating book. Our present unpretentious effort does not, of course, attempt to deal with the book historically or critically, but rather practically and doctrinally. If anything on the same line has preceded it, we confess our ignorance of the fact.

This book is not a dry historical compilation. It is a work of thrilling narrative and heroic effort. It contains accounts of deeds of daring, of privation, of self-denial, of patient forbearance, of Christian fortitude, of spiritual battles,

and of grand triumphs for Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. As such it is intrinsically interesting. Dealing with good men as they really were and with bad men as they actually existed, it is bound to engage our attention and excite our interest. But it is not to tales of personal heroism, to deeds of self-denial and consecrated aggressiveness, or even to the blessed victories of Christianity, that we direct the thought in the present work. Of something altogether different from this we intend to treat. For, scattered throughout the rich fields of Luke's treatise, interspersed amid the historical settings of the book, are to be found many blessed and plainly revealed gospel doctrines. It is to these doctrines that we call attention.

The doctrines of the gospel are ever worthy of our earnest attention, careful study and hearty belief; a doctrine being as Dr. Adam Clarke has said: "A teaching, instruction or information concerning some truth that is to be believed as essential to our salvation." To quite an

extent the book of Acts is a treasure-house of Christian doctrine. Bishop Wordsworth has even said: "Here is the true foundation of apostolic doctrine and discipline." Prof. G. V. Lechler, D.D., has written: "Since it describes the origin, the establishment, the development, and the early progress and guidance of the church of Christ, it necessarily sets forth at the same time the eternal, fundamental principles of the church in every respect, 'delineating alike the individual, the congregational, and the ecclesiastical life of the Christian.' This book is, therefore, as Starke says, 'a witness of apostolic doctrine and primitive Christianity; a rule and guide for the government, the discipline and the order of the church; an armory which furnishes the church with weapons in its conflict with Antichrist; a repository that offers a remedy for every soul-destroying disease engendered by errors in the faith and offenses in the life and conduct of men; a storehouse which abundantly nourishes faith, patience and

hope; a mirror and a stimulus, promoting love and its appropriate works; a treasury, abounding in learning and sound doctrine.' "

To an extent we have herein treated some of the doctrines as found in Acts. Concerning our arrangement no fault, perhaps, will be found. Because of its importance, and because of its particular prominence in the Acts, we have begun with the Resurrection of Christ. We may say of it that it is the substantial basis upon which other Christian doctrines are so securely established. We have concluded with the Kingdom of God, as that brings us into the fixed, eternal state. Between these two the other doctrines are treated in the order which we have deemed best. An exhaustive treatment of all the doctrines of the Acts has not been attempted. Those treated are important and helpful. We trust we have made the work both interesting and instructive.

THE DOCTRINES OF THE BOOK OF ACTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

THE resurrection of Christ! How veritable a fact and how transcendent an event! When on that first glad Easter occasion our risen Redeemer calmly and majestically stepped from the darkness of the tomb into the dawning light of that memorable Sunday morning, what joy must have been in heaven; what new rejoicing must have thrilled and entranced the bright bands of expectant angels! And what light resplendent and what hope serene and what peace divine have been shed from that time onward upon the otherwise hopeless race of man! Ah, since we know of a surety that "the Lord has risen indeed," how our souls

can "look up with a steadfast hope," and how easy it is for us to be glad with exceeding joy!

Perhaps no truth of the Christian system is of any greater importance than this of the resurrection of our Lord. As one has said: "It deserves our particular attention, because it is the grand hinge on which Christianity turns" (*Buck's Theol. Dic.*) If skepticism can undermine this, it can undermine every other doctrine of the gospel. If this can be demolished by the attacks of infidelity all other gospel teachings are demolished with it, and the bright hopes of man are brought to nought. If the doctrine that Christ was raised from the dead is a shakable doctrine, then we have but a shaky religion established upon a shaky foundation. But if this doctrine is true and unimpeachable then we are settled upon a basis so substantial that the bitter attacks of enemies and the consuming inroads of time can have no permanent, deleterious effects upon it. Satan may rage and bad men

may contradict and blaspheme; but if Jesus our Lord came forth alive from the tomb, our religion is so solidly established that we have no just reason for fear.

Upon this adamantine rock, the resurrection of Christ, Christianity is founded. Upon this firm basis it has rested securely for more than eighteen centuries. Nor, as is well known, has the Christian religion gone unchallenged. It has passed through many a baptism of blood and of fire. In all conceivable ways it has been tried. In all imaginable ways it has been tested. Vindictively has it been assailed. Terribly has it been assaulted. On every hand it has had opposition. Open enemies have done their worst. So-called friends have exerted their pernicious influence. But it stands to-day a colossus, unmoved and unmovable, unshaken and unshakable. After long centuries of battle it has come off more than conqueror and lifts its head grandly aloft above the shattered wrecks and scattered carcasses of its most hate-

ful foes. Why has it successfully resisted all efforts to destroy it, and stood so solidly against the opposing forces of time? Because it is divine in its origin, and because it is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets," with a resurrected, ever-living Christ as its "chief cornerstone."

If the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is not a fact, it makes no especial difference how many of the other gospel doctrines are facts. They are all useless and unavailing without this; for "if Christ hath not been raised then is our preaching vain; your faith also is vain" (I Cor. xv. 14). As says Faussett: "The principal argument of the first preachers in support of Christianity was that God had raised Christ from the dead. If this fact were false the faith built on it must be false too." His life so humble and self-denying, His teachings so pure and spiritual, His death so ignominious and cruel—these all are inadequate to the saving of a single soul unless His resurrection is something that actually occurred.

The certainty is that, "if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished" (I Cor. xv. 17, 18). Another has eloquently said: "Had He remained in the grave the conclusion would have been that He was nothing less than a false prophet, a betrayer, a blasphemer, who had suffered death justly; but then what an inexplicable riddle His life would have been! Besides how fatal to the faith and hope of Christians would such continuance under the power of death have been! There could be no forgiveness of sins through His blood, no life, no blessedness through His name. To follow Him in self-denial and devotion were but to make life more miserable, and those who died believing in Him only perish like all the rest of mankind. But now having in truth arisen to an endless life by the power of God, He appears before us as God's Holy One, who could not see corruption . . . as the One who is to abide forever as 'the way, the truth and the life' " (*Kling*).

Because, therefore, of its vast and inestimable importance, the Bible teaches with all possible plainness the literal, bodily resurrection of the Saviour. If there is any past event which it strives to make clear, it is this one. If there is any historical fact which is set forth in unmistakable terms, it is this one. If there is one thing dwelt upon and repeated, reiterated and spoken of in such plain language that the most ordinary minds can grasp it, it is this one. If any occurrence is cleared from all mistiness of doubt and taught again and again in speech unambiguous and uncompromising it is this one. The eternal and all-wise God, in His loving solicitude toward the needy children of men, seems to have been determined to put this fact beyond all possibility of doubtful disputation. He who disbelieves this does it in the face and eyes of such accumulated and authentic evidence as has been vouchsafed on hardly any other event of history. He who persists in unbelief on this line is guilty of the enormous crime

of disbelieving God, and himself must take the consequences.

The resurrection of Christ is a matter of prophecy, and predictions of it are to be found in the Old Testament. Our Saviour also before His crucifixion, often referred to it and sought to impress it upon the minds of His disciples. After the event had taken place we find that the closing chapters of the four Gospels labor to establish in the mind of the reader the stupendous fact and corporeal reality of His actual resurrection. The various Epistles, with some exceptions, speak of it repeatedly; while in the book that closes the canon of Scripture it is brought before us in language which cannot readily be misunderstood.

But it is more especially to the book of the Acts of the Apostles that we purpose to invite attention in our consideration of the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ. That event is here taught "in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance." If nowhere else in the word of God were this event spoken of it is in this book.

put beyond all consistent possibility of intelligent doubt. The doctrine could be easily established and positively settled upon the testimonies of this book alone. It is referred to in numerous places, under differing circumstances, and before various classes and conditions of people. With a positiveness that will not brook our denial, with a clearness that compels us to understand, and with a reiteration that shows its transcending importance, the fact of our Lord's rising from the dead is constantly being brought before us in this treatise of "the beloved physician."

In the opening verses of the Acts, in the introductory words of Luke, the resurrection of Christ in this book is first introduced. He says of Jesus that unto the apostles, "He also *showed himself alive* after His passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days" (Acts i. 3). Thus in the very beginning of this treatise do we have presented to our minds the glad truth that Jesus is not dead, but living.

Notice, (1) He showed himself "alive." He had been dead, slain on Calvary for our sins. But now He was no longer dead; He was "alive," even "alive for evermore" (Rev. i. 18). He was alive, having been raised from the dead.

(2) He showed "himself" alive. It was He himself in His own, old-time personality. Jesus, as we learn from Luke's former treatise, had "himself stood in the midst of them," and had said unto them, "Peace be unto you." And when "they were terrified and affrighted and supposed that they beheld a spirit," He had said unto them: "Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do reasonings arise in your heart? See my hands and my feet that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having. And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet" (Luke xxiv. 36-41). There could be no doubt as to His literal, tangible personality. The living, the resurrected Christ, with "hands and feet," and "flesh and bones."

was the same One they had before known. It was "himself" alive again.

(3) When He showed himself alive after His sufferings and death, it was by "proofs." He proved to them that "himself" was again "alive." The Authorized Version reads "infallible proofs." The Greek word we find to be τεκμήριον, which means "a sign, indubitable token, clear proof" (*Green*). Another says that "the technical meaning of τεκμήριον in Aristotle is a 'demonstrative proof' " (*Hervey*). J. A. Alexander speaks of the word as being "used by Plato and Aristotle to denote the strongest proof of which a subject is susceptible." The evidences Christ gave of His resurrection were sure, such as could not be disputed. Even Thomas was convinced by them. Among the demonstrations by which He proved to them beyond all doubt that "himself" was "alive" again were the following: The being seen by them, their hearing His audible voice, the showing to them the same hands and feet that had been

nailed to the cross, the inviting of Thomas to put his unbelieving hand into the side where the Roman's spear had gone, the breaking before them of literal bread, the eating and drinking with them of material nourishment, the speaking of himself as having flesh and bones, etc. Surely these were proofs indeed. They were evidences of His resurrection that were absolutely unquestionable.

(4) Notice, too, that it was by "many" such proofs, "by numerous signs" (*Syriac*), that our Saviour established the fact that He had risen from the dead. He appeared to them, not once merely, but many times. He was with them, not for one day alone, but "by the space of forty days." He showed himself, not to one only, but, in addition to single individuals, to the two on their way to Emmaus (Mark xvi. 12), "unto the eleven as they sat at meat" (Mark xvi. 14), and "to above five hundred brethren at once" (I Cor. xv. 6). This, truly, is evidence upon evidence, demonstration added to demonstration, until assurance is made

doubly sure, and "many proofs" have made incontestable the fact of His resurrection. As the Rev. E. H. Bickersteth has said: "That His resurrection was a mighty verity, His frequent manifestation of himself through forty days was infallible proof."

In the next chapter the resurrection of Christ is spoken of in language the import of which is obvious and perspicuous. Speaking to the men of Israel, Peter shows to them how they had crucified and slain Jesus of Nazareth. He then adds: "*Whom God raised up*, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible that He should be holden of it" (Acts ii. 24).

Here we see that the Christ who was crucified is the Christ who was raised; that He who was slain is the very One who was afterward made alive from the dead. Now there are those who have, in their spiritualizing blindness, theorized away almost entirely the actual reliving of the real Jesus; who say His resurrection was not physical, but altogether

spiritual; that His resuscitation was simply the survival of the spirit, and not the raising of the body. Such ones, however, must be staggered by this statement of the Spirit-filled Peter. Of course the One who was "crucified" was a physical Christ. He who had been "slain" was a tangible person. And the apostle plainly declares the Crucified One was also the Risen One; that the Lamb slain was the Redeemer raised. The literality of the arising of our adorable Lord could hardly be presented with greater distinctness.

Again, it is here shown that it was God the Father who raised up Christ. "God's hand released Him from the grasp of death" (*Prof. E. Johnson*). As Peter said: "Whom God raised up." It has been asserted that Jesus raised himself from the dead. An idea more unbiblical and absurd could hardly be conceived. When the Bible speaks of Christ's resurrection as an historical fact, it ever says that He was raised by God. In this very book of Acts it is so as-

serted again and again (See ii. 24, 32; iii. 15, 26; iv. 10; v. 30; x. 40; xiii. 30, 33, 34, 37). This settles the question once and forever.* "It is not said that He rose," said Dr. A. J. Gordon, "but He 'hath been raised.' . . . Do you not see how wonderfully this idea is brought out in Acts ii. 24?" Then, too, it may be noticed that this verse says it was God "who loosed the pangs of death."

Our verse affirms that "it was not possible that He should be holden of it" (*i.e.*, of death). "Because," as Wesley says, "the Scriptures must needs be fulfilled." Alexander says it was impossible morally, "because the divine plan and purpose made His resurrection necessary." Dr. Cowles writes: "The work before Him demanded His victory over death and resurrection from the grave."

*We know of but two Scripture passages which may seemingly be contradictory to this, John ii., 19-22; x. 17, 18. That, however, the "power" or "right" mentioned was vested in the Father seems patent from the many Scriptures which assert that it was the Father who raised Him. And John ii. 22 reads: "When therefore *He was raised* from the dead." The aorist passive shows that the Son was the *recipient* of the action, not the *doer* of it.

While Milton has sung:

“ On me let death wreak all his rage,—
Under his gloomy power I shall not long
Lie vanquished; thou hast given me to possess
Life in myself forever; by thee I live.”

(*P. L. Bk. III.*)

Christ's Resurrection Proclaimed.—
Having now seen from these two verses that, in the book of Acts, our Lord's resurrection is taught with all clearness, we next invite the mind of the reader to the consideration of the significant fact that the primitive preachers of the gospel made much of that resurrection. As Lord Bishop A. C. Hervey has said: “It was one of their chief functions as apostles to bear witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.” It is something which they constantly affirmed and frequently reiterated. They preached with all positiveness that the crucified Christ had been raised from the dead. They proclaimed that He who had died for our sins had been raised again for our justification. They heralded the glad news.

that, although the Messiah was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth through the power of God. And this they did, too, in spite of opposition and imprisonment. "The apostles," says Prof. E. Johnson, "can never forget that they are 'witnesses of the resurrection.'"

In this respect, perhaps, those early men of God differed greatly from some of the popular pulpiteers of modern times; for it is undoubtedly true that some of the present-day preachers seldom mention the resurrection, either of Christ or the general arising at the last day. And if, perchance, on Easter they do render an essay on the resurrection of Christ, it may be, after all, but a kind of perfunctory performance and done because they know the people expect it. The love of the thing isn't in their hearts, as it was in the hearts of those holy men of old. And too often in our times when it is charily referred to, it is refined into a mere spirit survival. Possibly this is so because Platonic or other heathen philosophy has supplanted the pure

truths of the unadulterated word of God. And perhaps, too, the failure to proclaim the resurrection and kindred doctrines is one reason why in our midst to-day are being startlingly revived some of the pagan superstitions and heathen mysteries and spiritistic necromancies of dark and ancient times. The resurrection gospel in apostolic days made inroads on those erroneous and satanic systems, but now those vain things do at times make inroads upon a gospel which has in it all too little of the resurrection teaching.

But when we revert to the book of Acts, we are abundantly informed that the genuine resurrection of the blessed Jesus was continually and persistently promulgated by His early and devoted followers. Upon the actuality of that event their hopes were built. Upon that truth, as upon a firm foundation, they rested the new and divinely revealed religion. If they could induce the people to whom they carried the gospel to accept this fundamental truth of Christianity, they could then evidently persuade

them to accept the otherwise apparently preposterous claims of Christ. As Dr. A. Clarke has well said: "The doctrine of the resurrection of our Lord was a grand doctrine among the apostles; they considered and preached this as the demonstration of the truth of the gospel. The multitudes who embrace Christianity became converts on the evidence of this resurrection."

In Acts i. 8 we read these words of Jesus: "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." We thus see they were to be His witnesses, and they could not be true witnesses of Him unless they testified to His having arisen from the dead. And so, even before the promised power came upon them, we behold them making preparations for testimony on this very line. Information concerning this is imparted to us as follows: "And in these days Peter stood up in the midst of the

brethren, and said, Brethren, it was needful that the Scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered among us, and received his portion in this ministry.

. . . For it is written in the book of Psalms Let his habitation be made desolate, and let no man dwell therein, and his office let another take. Of the men therefore which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, . . . of these must one become a *witness with us of His resurrection*," (i. 15-22). That they intended to witness to His resurrection is clear.

In the fourth chapter of the Acts we have the account of the arrest of Peter and John, of their examination before the chief men, and of their release after being charged "not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus." On "being let go they came to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests

and the elders had said unto them. And they, when they heard it, lifted up their voice to God with one accord. . . . And when they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness. . . . And with great power gave the apostles their witness of *the resurrection of the Lord Jesus*" (iv. 23-33). That they proclaimed His resurrection is plain.

Seeing from this that the early disciples preached the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, that they bore unwavering testimony to that stupendous event, we will next notice the examples of that preaching and the classes of people before whom they bore such witness. Their preaching of this doctrine was not confined to any special nation, nor to any particular classes of the different nations. This truth was of such infinite moment that it must be carried to all classes among all nationalities. And now, bear in mind that every testimony

which they gave, and which we purpose duly to consider, will tend to show us how fully this doctrine is treated in the book of Acts. Every proclamation of this essential truth will conduce to confirm the more surely the veritableness of the fact itself.

To the Jews.—The great event with its accompanying blessings must be proclaimed “to the Jew first.” And so to the very nation that had rejected Christ came first of all the news that He had been raised from the dead. Although before He had come “unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not,” although they had wickedly murdered Him, yet a blessed and unmerited opportunity of receiving Him was, as individuals, to be offered them. This preaching of Christ and His resurrection to the Jewish people began at Jerusalem. Afterward, as we shall see, the tidings were carried to them more extensively. At Jerusalem the announcement was made first to the common people, the general masses; and then it was made to

the higher classes, the councilors, religious teachers, etc.

To the Common People.—The day of Pentecost came. The Holy Spirit was outpoured. Astonishing results followed that copious outpouring. The multitude came together. The people were puzzled and amazed. Scoffers began to mock. And Peter began to preach. With glowing heart and sparkling eyes, with pent feelings and earnest zeal, with fervid facts struggling for impassioned utterance, with resistless eloquence born of the Spirit's energizing power—he poured forth upon that spell-bound assembly the burning truths of God. But we are now mainly interested in what he said relative to the Lord's resurrection. On that line we will quote largely. Let the words speak now as so nobly they did then.

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves

know; him being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David saith concerning him, I beheld the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope; because thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption. Thou madest known unto me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of gladness with thy countenance. Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne; he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the

Christ, that neither was he left in Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses" (Acts ii. 22-32).

Lechler here says that the apostle's "remarks on the resurrection of Jesus, . . . extend through not less than nine verses; he thereby indicates that this great fact was the most important of all those to which he directed attention, and that he regarded it as his chief task to explain it to his hearers in a convincing manner. His remarks on the resurrection involve two points. First, he bears witness in his own name, and in that of all the other apostles, that the resurrection of Jesus was a fact which had actually occurred. . . . The apostle, in the second place, exhibits the resurrection in the light of prophecy, showing that the fact had been predicted by David and that the prediction was necessarily fulfilled in Jesus."

As a result of such uncompromising preaching, many believed that the Galilean who, but a short time before, had

been so shamefully crucified, was indeed the reliving Messiah. And three thousand souls, accepting the testimony of His resurrection, were converted to God. The foundation of Christianity was thus laid on the resurrection of Christ. As the Rev. Prof. R. A. Redford has said: "The resurrection is the vital point of the new faith."

The next chapter contains the narrative of the healing of "a certain man that was lame from his mother's womb." Seeing the healed man "walking and leaping, and praising God," the astonished people ran together unto Peter and John "in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering." This sudden gathering of the multitude gave the ready and enthusiastic Peter another grand opportunity of proclaiming to them the Christ. Such an opportunity he was not slow in improving, but again spoke to them the word of the Lord. And neither did he forget to announce to them that Jesus Christ had actually been raised from the dead. And, as Dr.

D. D. Whedon says: "The miracle just performed rendered its performers conclusive witnesses of the resurrection miracle." Peter's words are:

"Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this man? or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, hath glorified his Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release Him. But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of life; *whom God raised from the dead*; whereof we are witnesses. . . . Unto you first God, having raised up His Servant, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities" (iii. 12-15, 26). The upraising of Jesus is here announced with all needed perspicuity.

Before the Sanhedrin.—The council known as the Sanhedrin was the highest tribunal among the Jews, consisting of

seventy members besides the high priest. It was, so to speak, the supreme court of the Jewish nation, "the supreme judicial council of the Jews, especially for religious affairs" (*W. L. Alexander*). The members of this assembly were chief priests, scribes and elders. Of this body the high priest, if worthy, seems to have been president.

Before this stern and august assembly the apostles once and again bore witness of the resurrection of Him who, by this same body, had previously been condemned as worthy of death. The circumstances were as follows: The lame man had been miraculously healed. The people were becoming interested, and were being instructed by the disciples in the things pertaining to the Messiah. The captain of the temple and priests and Sadducees * were "sore troubled because they taught the people, and pro-

* "The first attempts to put down the new faith came from the Sadducees. The high priest and his immediate adherents belonged to this party. They hated the doctrine of the resurrection; and the resurrection of Jesus Christ was the corner-stone of all Peter's teaching."—(*Conybeare and Howson*.)

claimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in ward unto the morrow" (iv. 2, 3). The next day the rulers and elders and scribes and the high priest and his kindred, being assembled in Jerusalem, summoned the apostles to appear before them. The words of the sacred historian are these:

"And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, By what power, or in what name, have ye done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders, if we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man, by what means this man is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, *whom God raised from the dead*, even in Him doth this man stand here before you whole" (iv. 7-10).

Here, in the very teeth of these high officials who had instigated the cruel crucifixion of the Redeemer, is an un-

wavering testimony that He, the Crucified One, was dead no longer, but had been raised from death by that very God whom these dignitaries professed to believe in and serve. And they were further informed by those same intrepid and holy apostles that the "stone" which they, the builders, had set at nought "was made the head of the corner. And in none other (than in this same slain and risen Nazarene) is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (iv. 11, 12). Not alone were these functionaries made to hear that Jesus our Lord had been raised, but they were shown also that in Him, as brought again from the dead, was founded the hope of Israel, and that apart from this risen Christ salvation was utterly unobtainable.

In the fifth chapter we meet with the information that the apostles were imprisoned again, that the angel of the Lord brought them forth from the prison by night, and that they went into the

temple and were there teaching the people. From the temple, therefore, they were brought, and again before the council they were set. In reply to the question and charge of the high priest, "Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers *raised up Jesus*, whom ye slew, hanging Him on a tree. Him did God exalt with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour. . . . And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (v. 29-32). Again the slaying of Jesus and His being raised up are held before the notice of these chief men of the nation. Surely if they stubbornly refuse to accept this repeated testimony relative to His resurrection, then like some in our own time who are skeptical on this same point, they are responsible for their unbelief and will not be held guiltless before God.

To Jews Outside of Jerusalem.—We now proceed to show that the news of Christ's resurrection was carried to the

Jewish people who did not reside at Jerusalem. The Jews not only lived in the holy land, but engaged in various pursuits, were scattered about in different parts of the world. In the towns and cities of their own land and in many foreign places there were erected places of Jewish worship called synagogues. "In the time of the apostles," say Conybeare and Howson, "we have the fullest evidence that they existed in all the small towns in Judæa and in all the principal cities where the Jews were dispersed abroad." The Jews and proselytes to Judaism "assembled every Sabbath and festival day, the women sitting apart from the men" (*J. R. Beard.*) We are informed that the order of the service of the synagogue was the prayers, the reading and interpreting of the Law, then of the prophets, after which came the sermon and the pronouncing of the blessing. In the Acts we have these words of James: "For Moses from generations of old hath in every city them that teach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath" (xv. 21).

It appears that the primitive preachers very wisely availed themselves of the privileges which attended these gatherings of Jews and proselytes. Perhaps this was more especially so in the case of Paul and his co-laborers. They would attend the services and be given an opportunity of addressing the people.* On occasions like this they would preach "Jesus that He is the Son of God" (ix. 20). They would show "by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ" (xviii. 28). But in order to prove that He was indeed the promised Messiah, it was needful to show that He was alive. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary that they exhibit Him as having been raised from the dead. And in this manner, as also in other ways (ii. 5-11; xvii. 17), the Jewish people residing outside of Jerusalem came to hear of the resurrection of the Son of Man. Hearing of His resurrection they were privileged to accept it as true or to reject it as false.

* See chapter ix. 20; xiii. 5, 14; xiv. 1; xvii. 1, 2, 10, 17; xviii. 4, 19; xix. 8.

If, however, they received it as true, it was a virtual acknowledgment of their acceptation of Him as the long-looked-for Messiah. For if He had been raised from the dead—as He predicted of himself and as the Jewish Scriptures clearly declared the Messiah would be—it certainly substantiated His claims to the Messiahship and proved beyond all intelligent contradiction that He was the expected Redeemer of Israel and the “desire of all nations.”

But let us turn to the accounts of this announcement of the Lord's resurrection to the Jewish people outside of the city of Jerusalem. In the thirteenth chapter we have the record of the going of Barnabas and Paul (probably accompanied by others) “into the synagogue on the Sabbath day.” This was at Antioch in Pisidia. “And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation, say on” (verse 14). Such an opportunity the zealous apostles would not be

likely to allow to slip away unimproved. So "Paul stood up, and beckoning with the hand," began his address to the assembly. He gave a brief outline of the history of the Israelites from the choosing of the fathers until the time of David. He then continued:

"Of this man's seed hath God according to promise brought unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus. . . . For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning Him. And though they found no cause of death in Him, yet asked they of Pilate that He should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all things that are written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a tomb. *But God raised Him from the dead: and He was seen for many days of them that came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now His witnesses unto the people.* And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers,

how that God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that *He raised up Jesus*;* as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that *He raised Him up from the dead*, now no more to return to corruption, He hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the sure and holy blessings of David. Because He saith also in another psalm, Thou wilt not give thy Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had in his own generation served the counsel of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: but He *whom God raised up* saw no corruption" (23, 27-37).

What an intelligent and scriptural presentation this is of Jesus as the Christ! And note especially the decided declarations concerning His resurrection. How strongly Paul preached it! How earnestly he advocated it! How prominent

*"There can be no reasonable doubt that ἀναστήσας, raised up, means here, as in verse 44 [34], raised from the dead."—*Hervey*.

he made it! Ah, it was so essential, it was such a rock-bottom basis upon which to build the noble superstructure of an exalted Christianity, that he could not leave it untouched. Had he done so he would have been recreant and culpable. Had he done so he could have expected no one to receive Jesus as the Messiah. Leaving that unheralded and untaught the apostle would have seen no conversions, could not have advanced the cause of Christ. A crucified Christ, were He still dead, could be of no benefit to the people. But if Jesus were now alive, if He had been raised from the dead, He *might* be the Messiah; yea, He *must* be the Messiah. Earnestly and ardently, therefore, did the learned and loving apostle present to his attentive hearers that underlying truth of the Christian religion—the literal resurrection from the dead of Him who is our Lord and Saviour. Gerok even goes so far as to say: "Paul had no other theme than that of the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus; and now, after the lapse of so

many centuries, we can find no subject that is more important and profitable than that of the sufferings and resurrection of Jesus."

Again, in chapter seventeen of the Acts we find the account of preaching which must have been similar to that which we have last noticed. We may say that it shows the burden of the apostles' introductory discourses. Their first addresses to any people undoubtedly contained references to the Saviour's resurrection, with biblical and historical arguments upon that subject. This was done to convince the hearers that the prophet of Nazareth was the promised seed of the woman, the seed who was destined to bruise the serpent's head; and that, as such a Deliverer, He was no longer dead, but was made alive "after the power of an endless life."

We read that "they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews; and Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three Sabbath days reasoned with them from the Scriptures,

opening and alleging that it behoved the Christ to suffer, *and to rise again from the dead*; and that this Jesus, whom said he, I proclaim unto you, is the Christ" (1-3).

The noble herald of the gospel here brings before his auditors three distinct and necessary truths. He shows first that "it behoved the Christ to suffer." This is the presentation of a suffering Saviour. He shows last "that this Jesus, whom said he, I preach unto you, is the Christ." This is the presentation of Jesus as the true and predicted Messiah. But between these truths, binding them together and establishing them with unassailable certitude, is the second truth—that it behoved Christ "to rise again from the dead." This is the presentation of Jesus as the resurrected and ever-living Redeemer. Without this truth the first one presented is of no avail; and, apart from this, the third doctrine presented would not follow, the final grand conclusion that Jesus is the Christ, would not, in fact, be true. For a person

—notwithstanding all his claims—when once slain, if he remained under the dominion of death, certainly could not be “the Christ.” He could no more be a Saviour than could Mahomet or any other defunct impostor. But as Jesus was the One whom the father had sent to be “the Saviour of the world,” and as His claims had been indisputably established by His resurrection, it became necessary for His resurrection to be proclaimed in order that the people might know beyond any reasonable doubt that He was indeed the divinely sent Saviour.

These are samples given of how the news of the reviviscence of the Messiah was borne to the ears of the Israelitish people who did not reside in the holy city. In chapter xvii. 17, 18 may be seen another instance. And when we are told (viii. 4): “They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word,” we may well be sure that this preaching included the preaching to the outside Jews of our Lord’s revivification.

To the Gentiles.—The Deliverer whom

all the Old Testament prophets predicted was not intended to save Israel alone. The Anointed One foretold by God was not to be the Messiah of the Jews only. It was the divine intention for Him to redeem the believing people of all other nations as well. All the ends of the earth were to see the salvation of God. He was destined to be "a light for revelation to the Gentiles," as well as "the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke ii. 32). As Jesus himself said: "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sin should be preached in His name unto *all the nations*, beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke xxiv. 46, 47). The glad news of salvation, beginning at the holy city, was to go out in ever-widening circles—to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. Thus we see at Antioch in Pisidia, when the Jews became envious and contradicted and blasphemed, "Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be

spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us saying, I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth" (xiii. 46, 47. See also xviii. 6; xxviii. 23-28).

The Gentiles were mercifully included in the plan of salvation. Said Peter: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in *every nation* he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him" (x. 34, 35). Afterward speaking of the Gentiles before the ecclesiastical council at Jerusalem, he said that God "made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith" (xv. 9). Paul said: "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon Him" (Rom. x. 12, 13). Writing to Gentile converts, he says: "Wherefore remember that aforetime ye, the Gen-

tiles in the flesh . . . that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye (Gentiles) that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who made both (Jew and Gentile) one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that He might create in himself of the twain one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both (Jew and Gentile) in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and He came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) that were far off, and peace to them (Jews) that were nigh: for through Him we both (Jews and Gentiles) have our access in one spirit unto the Father" (Eph. ii. 11-18). He further shows that "the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-mem-

bers of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (Eph. iii. 6). And there can be, in fact, "neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female: for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 28). We can thus easily perceive that to Jew and to Gentile alike, without any distinction or partiality between them, the hope of redemption was to be carried. For the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation *to every one that believeth*; to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Rom. i. 16).

Now, if to the Gentiles also, the news of salvation through Christ was to be proclaimed, it would be needful, of course, to preach to them that He had arisen from the dead. They must hear that "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over Him." They must be made acquainted with the gospel truths that "to this end Christ died, and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the

dead and the living" (Rom. vi. 9; xiv. 9). And in the book of Acts we shall see that this doctrine was promulgated among the Gentiles as well as among the Israelitish people.

Speaking of the Christian religion, Smith's "Biblical Dictionary" says: "One of the causes of its success was undoubtedly the vivid belief in the resurrection of Jesus, and a consequent resurrection of all mankind, which was accepted by its heathen converts with a passionate earnestness, of which those who at the present day are familiar from infancy with the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead can form only a faint idea."

Peter was the one chosen by the Lord to preach the first gospel sermon to a Gentile congregation. This was at Cæsarea in the house of the centurion Cornelius. In a vision God had revealed to Peter that he should call no man "common or unclean," of whatever nationality he might be. Thus instructed, Peter was prepared to teach the

way of life to the waiting assembly of Gentiles. In this initiatory address to men of different blood, the legate of Christ did not leave out proper and definite instruction concerning the resurrection of Him whom he preached. He showed how "God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him. And we (said Peter) are witnesses of all things which He did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom also they slew, hanging Him on a tree. *Him God raised up the third day*, and gave Him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after *He rose from the dead*" (x. 38-41).

Perhaps among these Gentiles there were those who never before had heard of the resurrection of the dead; or, if they had heard of it, it may have been only to disbelieve and ridicule. But now

it was held before them as a settled fact of which there were many witnesses, that the Christ, at any rate, had been raised from the dead. Because they were Gentiles, and perhaps versed in some of the systems of heathen philosophy, Peter nevertheless did not shun to declare unto them in plain terms that in Judea there had actually arisen from the tomb a real person, which person he preached to them as both Saviour and Judge. This was strong meat; could they bear it? They must bear it, for without it there was no salvation. And we find, moreover, that they accepted it, were converted, and every one received then and there the gift of the Holy Spirit.

But please notice how the literality of the resurrection of the Lord was impressed upon them by Peter. He said that, after Christ was raised, God "gave Him to be made manifest." The Authorized Version reads, He "shewed Him openly." This thing was not done in a corner. The resurrection of Jesus was

not a hidden thing. The Lord was not merely raised, but He was visibly manifested to the gaze of beholders, actually seen by the eyes of men in His corporeal personality. And then, as if to make even more sure to the minds of those who composed this Gentile assembly, Peter speaks of himself and others as those "who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead." Nothing could be more plain, more real than this. And the Saviour's eating and drinking with His disciples after He was raised up is something not to be disregarded. The risen Saviour had, in the presence of witnesses then living, partaken with them of solid food. Surely, by such things as these His bodily resurrection was abundantly proved beyond the shadow of doubtful disputation. So Peter preached, and so they believed.

We next refer to the missionary endeavors of Paul among the cultured and arrogant minds at Athens. This city was "the capital of Attica, and the chief seat of Grecian learning and civilization

during the golden period of the history of Greece" (*Smith's Bib. Dic.*). It was, as says Scott, "the center of polite learning, philosophy, and the fine arts."

In this proud city the spirit of Paul "was provoked within him, as he beheld the city full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the market-place every day with them that met with him." While thus engaged he came in contact with "certain also of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers." Quite an interest was aroused in the things taught by Paul. That this interest was altogether a laudable one, we dare not affirm. But it gave to the apostle an opportunity of presenting his doctrines. For "some said, What would this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange demons: because he preached Jesus and the resurrection. And they took hold of him, and brought him unto the Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new teaching is, which is spoken by thee? For thou bringest certain strange

things to our ears; we would know therefore what these things mean" (xvii. 18-20).

Given such an opportunity, in such a place, before such an audience, this legate of Jesus Christ proved himself equal to the emergency. Meeting them first upon their own grounds, quoting from their own poets, he skillfully introduced the one true and living God, the great Creator of all things, who before had been "unknown" to them; and finally brought before them the duty of individual repentance and the need of personal preparation for the appointed judgment day, the proof of which judgment day rested in the established verity that God had already brought His Son from the tomb. After this fashion, then, did Paul show to his illustrious auditors the fact of the resurrection of Christ. His own words are: "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as He hath appointed a day, in the which He

will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that *He hath raised Him from the dead*" (xvii. 30, 31). Thus fully did the apostle perform his duty, and thus plainly did he hold forth the raising up of Christ to these philosophic Gentiles.

Another case in point may be found in the words of Festus. When that governor was telling King Agrippa of Paul and of the charges brought against him by the Jews, he makes mention of Paul's confident affirmation of the Lord's resurrection. Speaking of the apostle's examination before him, Festus said: "Concerning whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought no charge of such evil things as I supposed; but had certain questions against him of their own religion, and of one Jesus, who was dead, *whom Paul affirmed to be alive*" (xxv. 18, 19). From this we may gather that when Paul stood before the judgment seat of Festus, he must have asserted concerning the "Jesus who was dead"

that He afterward revived, being raised from the dead by the interposition of His Father's power.

And again, when Paul made his defense before Agrippa and the "chief captains and principal men of the city" of Cæsarea, he failed not to impress upon them that Jesus his Lord was yet alive. The renewal of the Saviour's life by being made alive from the dead, is spoken of in the most explicit terms. Paul speaks of his own early life, of his Pharisaic religion, of his work as a persecutor, of his conversion to Christ, of his commission to preach, of his labors in the gospel, of his apprehension by the Jews, and then continues: "Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; how that the Christ must suffer, and how that *He first by the resurrection of the dead* should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles" (xxvi. 22, 23). The apostle here shows, not only

the resurrection of Christ, but that such a resuscitation had been anciently predicted, that "the prophets and Moses did say" that such things should come to pass. Both prophetically and historically he was standing upon firm ground, upon a foundation that could not be moved. Therefore it was that "he stood steadfast, a faithful witness, testifying to young and old, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, the fulfillment in Jesus Christ of all the Old Testament prophecies, which foretold a suffering and yet triumphant Messiah, the Conqueror of death, the Saviour of Israel and of the world" (*E. H. Bickersteth*).

We now bring forward another class of passages found in Acts which we consider as relevant to the subject we are considering. Though these passages may not directly assert the re-living of Jesus yet they appear positively to imply that great fact. We refer to His being announced as the Messiah or as the Son of God.

After the apostles had been brought

before the council and beaten, and charged not to speak in the name of Jesus, we read: "And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ," (Acts v. 42). If Jesus was the Anointed One he could not be held under the power of death. When they thus taught the people that He was the Messiah it was evident on the face of it that they preached Him as revived and ascended. As Clarke says, in his comment on this verse: "They took advantage of the public assemblies in the temple as well as of private opportunities . . . to proclaim Jesus as the only Messiah, that He who was crucified rose from the dead and was exalted a Prince and Saviour at the right hand of God." Whedon, in his comment, goes even further. He writes: "These unsilenceable men . . . ceased not to proclaim to reluctant Israel that the Messiah had come *and was yet to come again.*" If, then, they preached His second coming (as we know they did) it surely presupposed and included His revivification.

When Philip preached Jesus to the inquiring eunuch (viii. 35), he must have preached a resurrected Christ. That portion of Old Testament Scripture which the Ethiopian was reading (Isaiah, chapter 53) refers to the death of Christ as the sacrifice for our sins. It was from this very Scripture that Philip began when, in the chariot, he preached to him Jesus. But if Philip had gone no further than the death of Christ, it is evident that the eunuch would not so readily have become a convert. A person left dead in the tomb could surely be no Saviour, and would not be a very likely object to command faith. Philip therefore must have gone beyond the grave to the resuscitated and ever-living Redeemer. And the prophetic chapter which they were considering certainly contains an allusion to the raising of Christ from the dead. At the tenth verse, after speaking of making Christ's "soul an offering for sin," it continues: "He shall see His seed, *He shall prolong His days.*" This prolong-

ing of His days by God must refer to the life of Jesus after His three days' entombment. "The meaning of the passage, then, is," says the Rev. R. Jamieson, D.D., "that although the Messiah's soul was to be made an offering for sin, yet He should *come to life again*, and see His gospel . . . bringing forth good fruits." So we believe that the eunuch, in order to his conversion and before his baptism, must have heard from the lips of the evangelist the things concerning the resurrection of the blessed Lamb of God.

The first account we have of the preaching of Saul (Paul) is as follows: "And straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that He is the Son of God. . . . But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ" (ix. 20, 22). This was "straightway" after his conversion. But that miraculous appearance of Jesus to him on the road had convinced him that Jesus was alive and in heaven, and

so must be the Messiah. Therefore he zealously began to proclaim Him as being God's Son; ay, even further, he proved Him to be the Anointed One. It was not to be supposed for a moment that Paul announced that the crucified Nazarene, if still dead, was the Son and the Anointed of God. No one would then have believed it, nor would any one have been culpable for not believing it.

Then, again, we find him at Rome "persuading them (the Jews) concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and the prophets, from morning till evening" (xxviii. 23). This persuasion of the Jews concerning Jesus (and that, too, "from a source mutually acknowledged," the Jewish sacred writings), must have included His reviviscence. Whitby speaks of Paul's "persuading them of the truth of the things which he asserted concerning the birth, life, miracles, the death, the *resurrection* and ascension of the Lord Jesus."

Of the beginning of Paul's work at Corinth we read: "And he reasoned in

the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks. But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ" (xviii. 4, 5). This undoubtedly contained in it the resurrection of our Lord, for we are instructed by the apostle himself (in his first Epistle to the Corinthians) in regard to the matter. He writes: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. xv. 3, 4). This is quite conclusive.

There are yet two occurrences in the book of Acts to which we desire briefly to allude. These two events testify loudly and plainly that the Redeemer was alive again after His cruel death on the cross. The first is the ecstatic vision of Stephen, immediately before his martyrdom. This scene teaches us, among

other things, that Jesus was living and in heaven. We read: "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" (vii. 55, 56). The Son of Man, in order to be in heaven and standing there on God's right hand, must have been raised from the grave and afterward ascended to the Father.

The other event is that remarkable occurrence which changed the whole course of the life of Saul, the mad persecutor. The scene transpired when on his way to Damascus in pursuance of his inquisitorial work. The record says: "And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest"

(ix. 3-5). Here it is certain of Saul's being convinced that the Jesus whom he had supposed to be an impostor was alive, and spoke audibly to him. As one writer eloquently says: "What was it which arrested the persecutor in his furious course, which turned back the whole current of his thoughts, which wrought in him that noble inconsistency, that holy apostasy from his previous convictions, which have placed him at the head of Christian teachers and confessors? It was the clear knowledge conveyed to him by his own senses of sight and hearing that Jesus Christ of Nazareth was risen, was alive, was glorified. He knew that he had been tried at the bar of Pilate, condemned, crucified, buried. He had thought that sentence a just one. He had thought that that life, closed in ignominy and shame, was closed forever, and that his own Jew's religion had thereby triumphed and been confirmed. Now he knew that God had reversed that sentence, and had raised Jesus from the dead, and declared him

in so doing to be his own eternal Son, both Lord and Christ" (*Hervey*).

We have now seen how fully, in the book of Acts, is taught the resurrection of Christ. With particular prominence it is there brought to view. In words plain, in language obvious, in terms explicit, it is held conspicuously to the front. It is not secret, hidden, unrevealed: it is open, apparent, clearly exhibited. It is plainly made manifest to all who will read. And we have seen, too, how the early preachers loved it, delighted in it, and proclaimed it with no uncertain sound. They rested upon it their all. They were persistent in telling it to others, even making its acceptance necessary to salvation. Before the Jewish people both low and high, before the Gentile peoples both barbarous and cultured, they held forth this essential truth. Wherever they went preaching the word, this doctrine was promulgated by them. And certain it is that it was received by all primitive Christians. May we of modern times not be behind

them in our certain belief of this foundation truth.

Upon the certainty of Christ's literal resurrection from the dead many things in the book of Acts are made to rest. Overturn the doctrine of His resurrection and the others are likewise overturned. Among them we notice the following:

1. That He ascended to heaven (i. 1-9, 22).

2. That He is the Christ, the true Messiah (ii. 36; v. 30, 31; xvii. 3).

3. That through Him sins may be forgiven, (v. 30, 31; x. 43; xiii. 38, 39).

4. That in Him alone is salvation (iv. 10-12; xvi. 30, 31).

5. That through Him the Holy Spirit is given (ii. 32, 33, 38; xi. 16, 17).

6. That God's promise is not void (xiii. 32, 33; xxvi. 6-8).

7. That He is to come again, to return to earth (i. 1-11; iii. 15-21).

8. That the dead are to be raised (iv. 2; xvii. 18; xxvi. 6-8).

9. That the world is to be judged (xvii. 31).

10. That Christ is to be the Judge (x. 40-42; xvii. 31).

Seeing then that these things are so, that not one of them can be truthfully spoken against, we ought not to do anything rashly as pertaining to this stupendous and infinitely important doctrine. We ought not to disbelieve it, for if we do we have no stone as a head of the corner. We ought not to spiritualize it until nothing remains but a shadow. It is not to be attenuated into a mere misty, unreal thing. This were worse than a direct disbelief of it. We are to believe it as fully, as actually, as physically, as it is revealed to us in this book of Acts. Receiving it fully, we are not to hide the light of it under a bushel. We are rather to hold it forth and let it shine. Thus will we ourselves be solidly established, and used by God in the establishment of others.

CHAPTER II.

OUR SAVIOUR'S ATONING DEATH.

LET not the reader think that we are about to give an explanation of the atonement. Such an attempt on our part were vain. Others may essay to give all the whys and wherefores; but as for ourself we humbly confess our utter inability to comprehend in all its mysterious lengths and breadths the sublime doctrine of the atonement. But, blessed be God, an atonement has been made. The great work of reconciliation has been accomplished. A blessed and satisfactory expiation has been effected. The proper propitiation is completed. We have some understanding of it, but to attempt to explain it—far be it from us.

We cite the following from Dr. L. L. Knox: "But, prominent as all the New

Testament writers make this event, no one of them attempts to give a philosophical explanation of the relation which the death of Christ holds to the salvation of the sinner. Theologians, through all the eighteen centuries of Christian history, have discussed this question with the deepest interest; but they have invariably, I believe, been compelled to admit that, when they have gained their clearest views of the subject, a mystery lies upon the precise point of greatest interest. The coveted explanation has never yet opened to the human mind."

We quote also from Rieger: "The doctrine of Christ dying and rising again, one for all, is doubtless far above human reason; and yet we soon learn from experience that it perfectly tallies with all that God's law and grace utters in our consciences. The great work of reconciliation commenced in the bosom of God, when He pitied us in our apostasy, our enmity, and our utter inability to return to Him. And yet the actual work

of reconciliation had to be accomplished by Jesus Christ, whose obedience, and sufferings, and death glorified God's righteousness, and implanted a permanent hatred to sin in our hearts, without which we could never come to God" (*In Lange*).

The truth of the atonement is a noble one. It is one of the transcendent truths of divine revelation. That "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" is one of the great facts already accomplished in the marvelous economy of God. We rejoice that "in due season Christ died for the ungodly;" yea, "we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation," or atonement.

Without a reconciliation on the part of Christ we may see that the Old Testament types are without signification. The offerings according to the law, the keeping of the passover, etc., these are in themselves comparatively worthless and meaningless unless they have some

higher import. But they shadowed forth the Lamb of God; they were typical of "Christ our passover," slain for us. They pointed to Him who "bare our sins in His body upon the tree."

Without an effectual atonement the world is hopeless and despairing. We know God to be infinitely holy. He is immaculately pure and altogether just. But man—how depraved and sunk in sin. "They are all gone aside; they are together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Ps. xiv. 3). All the world is guilty before God. And guilt has made a wide and deep chasm between us and Him. "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God" (Is. lix. 2). How shall such unrighteousness come before such righteousness? How shall such impurity approach such holiness? How shall sinful man be brought near to the ineffably Just One? How, but by the atonement? Christ has died "that He might bring us to God" (I Peter iii. 18). We broke the law. He kept it. We dishonored the

law. He magnified it and made it honorable. We deserved the full stroke of the law's penalty. He, in whom was no sin, was free from that penalty. Yet He bore it all. He carried the burden. He received the stroke. He took the crushing blow. For us He was bruised, and by His stripes we are healed. "He was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." Thus "God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 3, 4).

The great doctrine of the atonement has not gone unnoticed in the Acts. Whenever the apostles make mention of the death of Christ followed by His resurrection, the thought of the atonement is brought to view. It is not merely that Jesus died, but that His death was a sacrificial offering; not only that He gave His life, but that it was given a ransom for many; not alone that His precious

blood was spilt, but that it was shed "for the remission of sin."

The heathen in apostolic times were in the habit of presenting their offerings in idol temples (I Cor. viii. 4, 7, 10); while at Jerusalem the smoke of Jewish sacrifices was still ascending. But the gospel heralds could tell of a Lamb who was a true sacrifice, and who as such had been accepted in the sight of the living God. They could proclaim Him as the reality of which the altar sacrifices were but the shadow.

In chapter iii. 15, 18, are these words: "And killed the Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead. . . . But the things which God foreshewed by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He thus fulfilled." Here are presented the sufferings and death of Christ and the fact of His resurrection. Now the sufferings of Christ, ending in His murderous death, were not "shewed by the mouth of all His prophets," to no purpose and with no object. But, because, as the great pro-

propitiatory sacrifice, He was finally to die for the sins of men—for this reason evidently His sufferings were foretold. And those propitiatory sufferings, now accomplished, are alluded to by one who had been a personal companion of our Lord.

In the eighth chapter of Acts we have the history of Philip and the eunuch. When the evangelist joined himself to the chariot in which the eunuch was riding, the latter was reading Isaiah the prophet. The record has it: "Now the place of the Scripture which he was reading was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before his shearer is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth: in His humiliation His judgment was taken away: His generation who shall declare? for His life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other? And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture, preached unto him Jesus" (verses 32-35).

This Scripture refers directly to the suffering Messiah's work of atonement. He is here presented to us as the sacrificial victim being led to his death, as the Lamb of God who beareth the sin of the world. And because this Scripture refers so directly to Christ and His expiatory work, very easily and naturally could Philip begin "at the same Scripture" and "preach Jesus" to his attentive listener.

As we have noticed in a preceding chapter, the preaching of Paul at Thessalonica comprehended the suffering Saviour. He opened and alleged "that it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus whom, said he, I proclaim unto you, is the Christ" (xvii. 3). It "behoved" Him thus to suffer in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. It "behoved" Him to suffer that He might reconcile the world unto God, not imputing their trespasses unto them (II Cor. v. 19).

In the eighteenth chapter of Acts we have the account of Paul's work at Cor-

inth. He "testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ" (verse 5). He remained there a year and a half, "teaching the word of God among them" (verse 11). Nothing here is said especially concerning the atoning work of Christ. But that this "teaching the word of God," included this phase of the gospel we know from the apostle's epistles to the Corinthian church. Thus at I Cor. i. 23 he writes: "But we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling block, and unto Gentiles foolishness." And again: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. xv. 3, 4).

In this latter verse the atoning death of Jesus, that He died for our sins, is, in connection with His resurrection, particularly mentioned as the first teaching declared unto them by Paul. On the term "That Christ died for us," J. J. Butler

remarks: "That He gave up His life as an atoning sacrifice for us, that through His merits we might be delivered from the guilt and power of sin. He did not then simply die as a martyr, but as a propitiatory sacrifice." How plain from this, that "the word of God" included the Saviour's atoning death.

In his defense before Agrippa, Paul shows that, in all the years of his Christian experience, he had been "testifying both to small and great," (and that, too, in accordance with "what the prophets and Moses did say should come"), "that the Christ must suffer." If, during all those years of active, earnest and successful ministry, the apostle had been holding forth the necessity of the Saviour's propitiatory sufferings, we may well consider it essential that the atonement shall have a prominent place in all gospel teaching.

These things will suffice on this line. (We may, however, remark in addition that in Acts ii. 23; iv. 10; v. 30; vii. 52; x. 39; xiii. 27-29; the death of our Lord

is mentioned). Thus we have seen that the "word of reconciliation" is found in Acts. And the word of reconciliation is still to be earnestly proclaimed. The effectual sufferings and death of the Lamb of God are ardently to be pressed. The doctrine of the atonement is yet needed by the world. It will be well if modern preachers follow the example of the pioneers of the faith and "preach Jesus" and "Him crucified."

CHAPTER III.

REPENTANCE.

REPENTANCE is a duty positively imposed by God upon those who have sinned against Him. If the sinner would seek divine favor and partake of divine grace, he must repent of his sins. If the load of guilt is to be removed and the transgressions are to be forgiven, the guilty person must sincerely repent. If the smiles of the Almighty are to light upon the offender and the peace of God is to come into his heart, he must with contrite spirit turn from his iniquity and seek the forgiveness of Heaven.

Repentance is an evangelical doctrine. The heralds of Christ have ever proclaimed it. The missionaries of the cross have preached it. The true Church of the First-born has held it and taught it.

And weeping sinners have practiced it to the joy of their hearts and the salvation of their souls.

Repentance is a doctrine of both covenants. It is mentioned in the Old Testament (see I Kings viii. 47; Ez. xviii. 30), as well as in the New. In the nature of the case this appears necessary. Under the preceding dispensations the people had sinned as individuals, and as individuals it was needful for them to repent. As the Rev. Prof. J. R. Thomson has said: "This change of heart, of thought, of purpose, is a change indispensable to the highest privileges. . . . The condition of repentance is one abiding through all time."

True evangelical repentance means a great deal. So important is it, in fact, that Jesus himself said that there was more joy in heaven over one sinner who repented than over ninety and nine just persons who needed no repentance, (Luke. xv. 7).

We deem repentance as differing from mere sorrow. It is this, but it is vastly

more. As Jacobus informs us: "No anguish of feeling is anything, save as leading to Christ and to a change of life." Worcester tells us: "Repentance is a general term implying sorrow for something done, especially for sin; and it supposes a *change of conduct*." It is, indeed, "sorrow for sin such as produces amendment of life." On the word "repent," as found in Matt. iii. 2, Dr. E. W. Rice says: "The Greek word here used by Matthew implies a call to change the life, change the conduct, by a change of mind and heart."

To my mind three things are essential to repentance. (1) Knowledge of guilt, realization of personal sinfulness. No one will seek pardon until he realizes that he is a sinner. Thus Peter pressed home upon the people the thought that they were the murderers of Christ (Acts ii. 23; iii. 15). And Nathan (II Sam. xii. 7) said to David, "Thou art the man." (2) Sorrow for guilt, contrition because of sinfulness. No one will leave sin and seek pardon until he is of a penitential

spirit. Thus David said: "I will be sorry for my sin" (Ps. xxxviii. 18). And in II Cor. vii. 10 we are told that "godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation."

(3) The turning away from sin, the amending of the life. Thus John the Baptist told the people to bring forth fruits meet for repentance (Matt. iii. 8). This is such a changing of the mind and purposes that one turns to God purposing to serve Him.

Having made these preliminary remarks on the general subject of repentance, we now turn to that doctrine as it is contained in the Acts. And we will first notice that at the very opening of the dispensation of the Spirit, repentance was commanded. It was earnestly demanded of the people that they repent. We know the circumstances. On the day of Pentecost the Spirit was wondrously and mightily outpoured. Peter preached the gospel with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. The people were amazed and stirred. "They were pricked in their heart." In their pertur-

bation they inquired of the apostles what they should do. "And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (ii. 38). As a result three thousand of them repented and were baptized.

This preaching of repentance at the very outset is a significant fact. John the Baptist had preached repentance at the beginning of his ministry (see Matt. iii. 2; Mark i. 4; Luke iii. 3). And it is quite evident that he preached repentance during all the period of his ministerial labors. In the Acts we read: "When John had first preached before His (Christ's) coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel" (xiii. 24). When Jesus began to preach He announced to the people the need of repenting (see Matt. iv. 17; Mark. i. 15). And when, during His earthly career, He had sent forth His disciples, "they went out and preached that men should repent"

(Mark. vi. 12). And now since the Saviour after His resurrection had told them "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations" (Luke. xxiv. 47); and now that, after His ascension, He had sent the Holy Spirit, now on the very first occasion, having first convinced the people that Jesus had been resurrected, the necessity of repentance is held before them. And, without doubt, during all the years of this dispensation as well as "unto all the nations," Christ intends that repentance shall be proclaimed in His name.

We will notice, too, that in the Acts we are taught that repentance is of universal application. All men of all nationalities are under obligations to repent. We have already inadvertently noted this in a quotation from the Lord as recorded in Luke's gospel; but we now come to it as mentioned in the Acts. In chapter xxvi. 19, 20 we read: "Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but declared both to them of Damascus first,

and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judæa, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance."

Paul here shows that he had been declaring that the people should repent. But his heralding of repentance had not been confined to those of Hebrew extraction. To the Gentile as well as to the Jew he had shown how obligatory it was that they repent. But let us read again; this time from xvii. 30: "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent." This, of course, is conclusive. "All everywhere"—this is very broad. It is all comprehensive. It shows clearly the universality of the duty of repenting.

We will take cognition of the fact that in the Acts God is said to "give repentance." Chapter v. 31 is as follows: "Him did God exalt with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins." At chapter xi. 18 these words

occur: "And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life."

On the former of the above verses Dr. G. V. Lechler observes: "The apostles had testified from the beginning that no one could be saved through Christ without a change of mind; they also taught that all who repented of their sins should obtain forgiveness and grace through Jesus Christ. But Peter here intimates that repentance and forgiveness of sins are to be viewed as the grace or gift of God. That forgiveness of sins is a gift of the grace of God, that man cannot atone for his sins in his own person and cleanse himself from guilt by his own means, are obvious truths to which the Old Testament also bears witness, *e. g.*, Ps. xxxii. 1, 2, 5. But that the change of mind itself is a gift of God, imparted through the Spirit and his gracious influences, is here distinctly declared. This doctrine by no means in-

volves a denial of the freedom of the will, but implies that no true change of mind and no true conversion can take place without the converting grace of God."

The Rev. Henry Cowles, D.D., remarks on this verse in the following language: "The precise sense in which He 'gives repentance,' while yet repentance is and must be the free act of the sinner, should have our attention. The most obvious and satisfactory explanation assumes a special reference to the promised gift of the Holy Ghost—a fact and power constantly present to the thought of Peter in all these discourses—a fact which fully and even specially includes that divine agency which leads, draws sinners to repentance. This agency never conflicts with the sinner's own agency, never supersedes it, but only moves, inspires, directs it."

It may be well to observe that in the Acts there are several passages where repentance and the remission, forgiveness, or blotting out of sins are men-

tioned in conjunction. Two of the passages (ii. 38; v. 31) have already been quoted. Others we will cite. "Repent ye, therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out" (iii. 19). "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee" (viii. 22).

We should judge from such Scriptures that pardon, as one of its necessary conditions, depends upon repentance, that sins will not be blotted out unless first repented of. And this we believe to be true. The sinner who will not repent and accept Christ will not be forgiven. The impenitent are unpardoned.

Repentance, in order to be beneficial and truly effectual, must be closely connected with faith. Unless it is accompanied by true faith it will not result in salvation. See how, in the Acts, the Apostle Paul linked together the two. He reminds the Ephesian elders that he had kept back nothing profitable, but had showed and taught them publicly

and privately, and had testified "both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (xx. 20, 21). Here we see that, in the apostolic mind, the two were intimately united. And so, too, with us, repentance should ever be associated with faith. As we have, therefore, noticed the passages in Acts which relate to repentance, we purpose in our next chapter to notice those which relate to faith.

From this brief consideration of the doctrine of repentance we perceive that, in the Acts, repentance is proclaimed, that it is universally obligatory, that it is connected with forgiveness, and is inefficacious unless attended by faith. Sinning souls need to hear and heed the command, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel."

CHAPTER IV.

FAITH.

THE doctrine of faith, or belief, which has so vital a relation to the whole grand system of Christianity, is again and again presented to us in the book of Acts. Though this precious doctrine has undoubtedly been greatly abused (and what Bible doctrine has not?) yet it is a firm and fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion. In the Acts it shines forth with lustrous brilliancy. The word "faith" does itself occur on an average of once in each two chapters; while the verb "to believe" (used in a saving sense) is found about once to every chapter. This alone shows how important a place, in the estimation of the first propagators of the gospel, was occupied by faith. This doctrine is well worthy of our consideration.

In Acts ii. 44 the pentecostal Christians are designated as "all that believed;" in v. 32 the Christians are spoken of as "the multitude of them that believed;" in v. 14 they are called "believers;" the Jewish Christians, in distinction from the Gentiles, are mentioned as "they of the circumcision which believed" (x. 45); the Christians of Achaia are alluded to as those "which had believed through grace," (xviii. 27. See also xix. 18; xxi. 20, 25; xxii. 19.) As special examples we may note that Stephen was "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost" (vi. 5); and that Barnabas "was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith" (xi. 24).

In Acts the gospel is itself several times termed "the faith." Thus: "A great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (vi. 7. See xiii. 8; xiv. 22; xvi. 5; xxiv. 24). On the passage we have quoted Barnes comments: "The word *faith* here is evidently put for the Christian religion. Faith is one of the main requirements of the gospel,

and by a figure of speech is put for the gospel itself."

Cruden defines faith as "a dependence on the veracity of another." This definition contains considerable. It does not make faith to be merely an intellectual belief of another's truthfulness, but a depending belief, or "dependence," on the veracity of another. For instance, if God said He would save the person who trusted Him, such a person must do nothing in a vain attempt to earn salvation for himself, but must depend wholly on God to perform what He had promised. In such a case God, "who cannot lie," but is faithful always, would certainly effect the promised salvation.

Faith is absolutely essential. He who would be saved must believe. We are informed in Hebrews: "And without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing unto Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek after Him" (xi. 6). When Jesus gave His disciples the commission to "preach the gospel to

the whole creation," He added: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark. xvi. 15, 16).

It is not enough to have faith in God alone. We must believe in His Son also. "And this is His commandment, that we should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ" (I John. iii. 23). In the Acts we read: "And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus" (xix. 4). Paul speaks also of "testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (xx. 21).

Faith must be exercised in Christ's atoning work. His sufferings for us on the cross must be properly appreciated and believed. The Spirit of Christ in the old prophets "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them" (I Peter i. 11). The fulfillment of this testimony concerning His

sufferings is noticed in Acts when Peter says: "But the things which God fore-shewed by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He thus fulfilled." And Paul: "I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; how that the Christ must suffer, and how that He first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles" (iii. 18; xxvi. 22, 23).

True saving faith must be an abandoning faith. By this we mean a faith which abandons all other hopes of salvation and leans wholly on the merits of the Lamb of God. Until a person does exercise a faith which relinquishes all things else, he cannot expect to be fully and graciously received. So long as one depends to any extent upon the supposed merits of his own goodness, there is no hope for him. A total abandonment to Christ, confidently trusting Him for salvation, is essentially necessary. As

Prof. E. Johnson has said: "Faith is whole-hearted surrender to the Divine Object. It is not a mere act of intelligence, nor yielding of the affections, nor decision of the will; but the giving up one's self to Christ. It is this which brings the full blessing of divine peace upon the heart, and nothing short of this can do so."

Our faith must be an appropriating faith. A purely historical faith, a bare belief of the facts, a mere mental assent to the truthfulness of the gospel—this is not enough. There must be a faith which individually appropriates to itself the benefits of the Saviour's sacrifice, which personally reaches after and takes to itself the cleansing efficiency of His shed blood. Each one must exercise a belief which grasps, draws to one's self and assuringly rests upon, the reconciliation effected by His death. Such a faith will result in salvation. Says Whedon: "This faith is not simply the belief of the intellect. . . . It is the act of the assenting intellect, the consenting heart, and

the accepting will, by which a man's soul deposits itself into the hands of the Redeemer. . . . It is self-surrender to Christ" (on Rom. iii. 22).

In the book of Acts we have some exhibitions of what God will do for the truly believing heart, some results following a proper faith in God. To some of these we will give our attention.

1. *Healing by Faith*.—We find examples of physical healing as a resultant of faith. There is the case of the lame man who was healed at the Beautiful gate of the temple. This is called a "miracle of healing" (iv. 22). Referring to it the apostle exclaims: "And by faith in His (Jesus') name hath His name made this man strong, whom ye behold and know: yea, the faith which is through Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all," (iii. 16).

Another account of bodily healing attributed directly to faith is found in chapter xiv. 8-10. We give it in the words of the inspired historian. He writes: "And at Lystra there sat a cer-

tain man, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. The same heard Paul speaking; who, fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked." These words utter their own voice.

2. *Saved by Faith*—Salvation we know must come by faith. An exhibition is brought to our notice. Paul and Silas while at Philippi in pursuance of the gospel work were arrested, beaten, and incarcerated in the prison with their feet fastened in the stocks. About midnight, while they were holding a prayer meeting between themselves (having the prisoners, however, as listeners), there came a violent earthquake which materially altered the aspect of things. The doors were opened and the prisoners' bonds were loosed. The frightened jailer, after a vain attempt at suicide in which he was interrupted by the voice of Paul, sprang in and fell down before the

preachers. Then, having brought them out, he inquired: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Their answer was (and how it exhibits the importance of belief in Jesus): "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house" (xvi. 30, 31). Barnes remarks: "They told him to believe at once; to commit his agitated and guilty and troubled spirit to the Saviour, with the assurance that he should find peace. They presumed that he would understand what it was to believe; and they commanded him to do the thing. And this was the uniform direction which the early preachers gave to those inquiring the way of life."

The account in Acts continues: "And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately. And he brought them up into his house, and set meat before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God."

3. *Justification by Faith.*—How important a doctrine is this! So vital is it, indeed, that apart from it no possibility is granted to us of being made free from sin. Dr. J. J. Butler has said: "This may be regarded as the cardinal doctrine of the gospel. So Luther maintained it. It exhibits the way and the only way in which sinful man can be reconciled to the holy God."

The Bible considers all men in their natural state as sinners. "For all have sinned" (Rom. iii. 23). As sinners they are "lost" (Luke xix. 10; II Cor. iv. 3), in a "perishing" condition (I Cor. i. 18). We are not taught in the holy Word that good works on our part will atone for past sins. No good deeds of the present or future can atone for past misdeeds or cleanse a heart already corrupted. As one has said: "All hopes founded on human merit shall perish" (*G. W. Clark.*). If ever saved, it will be by the forgiving mercy of God and not by any virtue or worthiness of ours. As Paul wrote to the Ephesians: "For by grace have ye

been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, that no man should glory" (ii. 8, 9). And to Titus: "But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and His love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by His grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (iii. 3-7).

Man of himself is thus left a lost sinner, without power in himself to rid his heart of sin or to bring himself into favor with God. But, although he cannot save himself from sin, he is not allowed to remain in hopelessness. He is shown in the gospel the possibility, through the mercy of the Almighty, of being forgiven his transgressions, of being justified by faith.

The blessed doctrine of justification by

faith, of obtaining forgiveness by trusting in the merits of the Saviour's blood—this fundamental doctrine is found in the book of Acts. At chapter xiii. 38, 39 we read: "Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you the remission of sins; and by Him every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

Of "every one that believeth," Wesley here says that he "has the actual forgiveness of all his sins at the very time of his believing." Says Alexander: "The gift thus offered was not only pardon, or deliverance from punishment; but justification, or deliverance from guilt, reaching to all the sins of all believers." And this is by faith. "The nature of evangelical righteousness," says Lisco, "is that it is obtained by faith in Jesus Christ."

4. *Remission by Faith.*—This is so akin to the preceding that we will not dwell upon it lengthily. The remission

of our sins, the absolution from our guilt, is a blessed truth of the Scriptures. In the Acts we are plainly shown that it is because of our faith. Thus Peter, in the first sermon preached to Gentiles, cries out: "To Him bear all the prophets witness, that through His name every one that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins," (x. 43).

5. *Purification by Faith.*—The thought is consoling that, though once impure, a person may be purified. The unclean heart may be cleansed. We may wash our robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. The cleansing through that blood, if ever ours, is so by faith. This is set forth in the Acts. We read that God "made no distinction between us and them (*i. e.*, Jews and Gentiles), cleansing their hearts by faith" (xv. 9). "Faith," observes the Rev. C. Gerok, "is the only true evangelical means of purification, as it cleanses from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit by being the medium through which the power of the blood of Jesus penetrates the soul."

6. *Inheritance by Faith.*—The heavenly inheritance, the “inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God” (Eph. v. 5), is for the believer. It is to be obtained by faith. In xx. 32 we read of “the inheritance among all that are sanctified.” At xxvi. 17, 18, we find that Jesus sent Paul to the Gentiles “that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me.” The “inheritance among the sanctified” as well as “remission of sins” must be received “by faith in” Christ. “The way to the inheritance, therefore,” says Prof. P. C. Barker, “cannot be found except by the paths of faith, the ‘faith that is in Christ.’ ”

From these things we observe that in the Acts the doctrine of faith is not neglected. Faith, being requisite and vital, is given its due place. Perhaps the meditative and devout study of the various examples of faith as found in this part of the sacred writings might be beneficial in the strengthening and increasing of our faith. Faith isn’t to be manufac-

tured. We cannot make it to order. But the degree of faith already graciously granted to us may be blessedly developed in God's ordained ways. And one of those ways is through the Scriptures. "So then belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. x. 17). Devout perusal and constant meditation of the divine revelation will tend greatly to strengthen true evangelical faith. And the examples found in the book of Acts should be truly helpful to the pious soul.

CHAPTER V.

BAPTISM—THE LORD'S SUPPER.

WE apprehend that a consideration of the doctrines of the Acts would not be complete without some reference to baptism. As baptism is quite frequently mentioned, we will here briefly give attention to it. The baptism of John, however (see i. 5, 22; x. 37; xi. 16; xiii. 24; xviii. 25; xix. 3, 4), and the baptism with the Holy Spirit (see i. 5; ii. 1-4, 33; xi. 15, 16), we will pass by in silence, and will confine ourselves to the Christian sacrament of water baptism.

We may begin, then, by stating that in the Acts baptism is positively commanded. It is an imperative duty emphatically enjoined. It was demanded of those who accepted Christ as their Saviour that they be baptized. They would thus publicly confess their faith

in Him as the Redeemer. And they thus would show forth their faith in His death and resurrection; their faith in the general resurrection, and that they themselves were "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Says Bishop Wordsworth: "Baptism itself was a public representation of the resurrection. It was spiritually a 'death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.' . . . And the immersion of the catechumen in the water and his emergence from it, was a visible figure of the resurrection of the dead." Dr. Whedon writes: "The church early recognized the connection between baptism and resurrection. It has its basis in the words of St. Paul: 'Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him' (Col. ii. 12). And so Chrysostom says: 'When we have instructed the catechumen in the divine mysteries of the gospel and are about to baptize him, we command him to say, 'I believe in the resurrection of the body.' ""*

*"It is needless to add that baptism was (unless in

But we have left our point, viz., that in the Acts baptism is not left to our own choosing, but is a command to every one who purposes to be a Christian. Thus Peter, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, cries out: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (ii. 38). Here the two duties of repentance and baptism are demanded of "every one" of them. And at the house of Cornelius, when the Gentiles present had all been converted and had received the gift of the Holy Spirit, we are told that Peter "commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (x. 48).

exceptional cases) administered by immersion, the convert being plunged beneath the surface of the water to represent his death to the life of sin, and then raised from this momentary burial to represent his resurrection to the life of righteousness. It must be a subject of regret that the general discontinuance of this original form of baptism has rendered obscure to popular apprehension some very important passages of Scripture."—*Conybeare and Howson*.

When at Damascus Saul of Tarsus—for three days without sight, without food or drink—was praying as probably he had never prayed before, we are informed that Ananias was sent to him by the Lord. Among other things Ananias said to the agitated persecutor: “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on His name” (xxii. 16). Here again the command to the duty of baptism is plainly apparent.

It is worthy of remark that those who accepted Jesus obeyed the command respecting baptism. We may even see the sad truth that some who were unworthy were baptized along with the more worthy ones (viii. 13). The first converts, those of Pentecost, went forward in the divine ordinance the very day of their conversion. The account tells us: “Then they that received this word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls” (ii. 41).

The administering of the sacrament of baptism accompanied the great Samar-

itan reformation. At Acts viii. 12 we are told: "But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Verse 16 later informs us that "they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus."

The narrative concerning the eunuch and his baptism is quite interesting. When Philip "preached unto him Jesus," it seems that the duty of being baptized must have been included in the evangelist's discourse. At any rate, the eunuch himself cried out: "Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" As nothing did hinder, Philip straightway "baptized him" (viii. 36-38).

Saul obeyed the commandment that came, to him through Ananias. Evidently the vision of Jesus, which had been vouchsafed to him in the way as he came had caused a complete revolution in his mind. Jesus was indeed the risen Messiah, and yet he, Saul of Tarsus, had been persecuting Him. But Saul would

now believe and repent and obey. And the baptismal waters were doubtless sweet and pleasant to him. It was in obedience to that One whom so grievously he had misjudged and so greatly he had wronged. So, when Ananias had spoken to him, "straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized" (ix. 18).

At Philippi a woman convert named Lydia "was baptized and her household" (xvi. 15). And after the prison and earthquake experience, the jailer and his family had the rite administered to them. We read: "And they spake the word of the Lord unto him with all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his immediately" (xvi. 32, 33).

In the city of Corinth, where the Lord had much people, we are told that "many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (xviii. 8). At Ephesus Paul found twelve disciples who had been

baptized "into John's baptism." To them he said: "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus. And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus" (xix. 4, 5).

It may be well to observe that the baptismal duty and custom about which we have been speaking is a water baptism. Some good people have entirely overlooked the fact and command of baptism in water. How they do so it certainly is difficult to understand. But the book of Acts shows forth plainly the fact and validity of gospel water baptism. How more clearly could such a baptism be mentioned than it is mentioned by Peter in chapter x. 47? Already had the candidates received Christ; already on them had been poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit; and yet the Spirit-filled and guided apostle cries out: "Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy

Spirit as well as we?"* In connection with this commanded baptism, water is expressly mentioned.

Take the case of the eunuch to which we have already alluded. It is impossible to eliminate the water from the account which is given. The sacred historian in recording what actually took place—and what took place, too, under the special direction of the blessed Spirit—makes explicit reference to water several times. The full narration is as follows: "And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water," etc. (viii. 36-39). Surely by the candid heart such plain

*"Alford's deduction from the form of expression here, *the water*, that 'the practice was to bring the water to the candidates, not the candidates to the water,' appears to me far-fetched."—(Abbott's Comm., *in loc.*)

statements regarding water baptism cannot be honestly ignored or explained away. Baptism in water, "an outward sign of an inward grace" (and that, too, after the formal beginning of this dispensation of the Spirit) is taught in the Acts and has been practiced from then until now.

It may be well here to make some observations relative to the mode of water baptism. Upon this subject there have been much disagreement and much positive wrangling. In what we say, however, we purpose to keep sweet and good-natured, and trust that the reader will do likewise.

As for myself, I confess that I am an immersionist. I plead guilty to believing that immersion is the true method of Bible baptism, and that nothing else is such. In my boyhood days I believe I never witnessed an immersion; in fact, I do not remember of ever having heard of such a thing. This was not because there were no immersionists in the city where I lived, but because I did not at-

tend services with those denominations who practice immersion. Later, however, immersion appeared to me as being the only true scriptural method. This view, we believe, is sustained by the book of Acts.

Now the question is not merely, What are the meanings which have been attached to the anglicized verb "to baptize?" The general definitions given to this word would not bring us to any definite idea of what the Bible means. We may rather ask, What signification was conveyed eighteen centuries ago when Peter told the people to repent and "be baptized?" What meaning did it bring to them who were untrammelled by the later subtleties and distinctions relative to this word in vogue among theologians?

When Ananias said to Saul, "Arise and be baptized," what idea would then accompany such a use of the imperative of βαπτίζω? What idea would Ananias have in his own mind when using the word, and what idea would come to

Saul's mind in hearing it? Would it then have a variety of possible meanings, any one of which a person might select at his leisure? or would it have some definite and special import?

When Luke used this term so many times in the Acts, what, think you, was the impression upon his own mind? And when read then by persons whose mother tongue was the Greek language, what signification would it naturally and always convey to them? Would it mean merely "an application of water" to the person, no matter how applied? To the Greek mind would it then carry the thought of aspersion or of effusion? or would the thought of immersion come immediately into the mind? Or would it leave him puzzled as to what was meant? Would he be nonplussed as to whether the Lord desired of him some special duty, or whether he was to choose one out of the several which the word presented? Perhaps the reader

*It appears to me that a mistake is made in speaking of baptism as an application of water to the person. It is rather an application of the person to the water.

will agree that, to the Greek mind, at least, there would be no argument in those days as to method. Undoubtedly to such a one the thought conveyed would be a very definite one. If definite then, it should be none the less so now.

In that which we are commanded to do, it is well to observe scriptural precedents and examples. We may say that such things "were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come." Now there is, in the Acts a passage which, while having no reference to baptism, we desire to allude to by way of illustration. It is found in chapter vii. 44, and is as follows: "Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, even as He appointed who spake unto Moses, that he should make it according to the figure that he had seen."

(Look up Ex. xxv. 8, 9, 40; xxvi. 30; xxvii. 8; Heb. viii. 5.)

Here we see that the tabernacle was to be constructed after a special manner, according to particular specifications. A

“figure” or “pattern” having been shown to Moses, he was to see that the tabernacle was made after that distinctive fashion. Nothing else would do. To have given directions for it to be made in any other way would have been on his part a flagrant disobedience. So, too, when plans and directions had been given to those performing the work, if they had knowingly departed therefrom they surely would have been blamable. The pattern had been given, directions had been delivered; and they, therefore, were to act accordingly.

The Lord had His reasons why the tabernacle should be builded in a certain way. The repeated directions show that much importance was attached to it. There was significance in it. And in all of the Lord’s directions and ordinances there are adequate reasons. To depart from His plan destroys the intended significance. And so with the significant ceremony of baptism. We should follow the examples set.

That the apostolic and primitive

method of baptism was immersion is generally conceded. Thus in Smith's "Bible Dictionary" we read: "The language of the New Testament and of the primitive fathers sufficiently points to immersion as the common mode of baptism" (Am. Ed., vol. I, p. 241). Benham's "Dictionary of Religions," in presenting the Pedobaptist view of baptism, says: "Immersion was, there is no doubt, the first rule of the church. All early descriptions of baptism . . . use such words as going down, and plunging in the water." (Quoted by E. B. Sanford.) Speaking of "baptism in the apostolic age," Kitto's "Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature" makes mention of the whole body as being "immersed in water" (Vol. I, p. 288).

In the late Dictionary of the Bible edited by James Hastings, we read: "The rite is nowhere described in detail; but the element is always water, and the mode of using it was commonly immersion. . . A death to sin was expressed by the plunge beneath the water, and a rising

again to a life of righteousness by the return to light and air; and hence the appropriateness of immersion" (Vol. I, p. 243). Wesley,* in note on Rom. vi. 4, speaks of "the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion." In order, then, to follow biblical and primitive examples in the rite of baptism, we must adhere to the pattern, form, or mode originally practiced.

But we must continue no longer on this line. We have seen from the Acts that baptism was commanded, that the requirement was obeyed by all those who desired to be Christians, that this was a water baptism, and was manifestly performed by immersion.

It may not be out of place if, in this chapter, we should make passing mention of that other noble sacrament of the gospel, viz., the Lord's Supper. So to it we invite brief attention. This is a

*So, too, Whitby, Locke, Burkitt, Barnes, Bloomfield, Olshausen, Webster and Wilkinson, Conybeare and Howson, Hatch, J. J. Butler, etc.

beautiful rite, an impressive ceremony, a most touching service. It is an institution of solemn sacredness and tender sympathies. At the Lord's table we come into loving sympathy one with another and into blessed touch with our ever-adorable Lord.

It is called the Lord's Supper. As such it was instituted by our Saviour. On that memorable night of His base betrayal it was first celebrated. From then until now, in commemoration of our Lord's bruised body and shed blood, this touching ordinance has been practiced in the Christian church.

It is also called the communion. As such it is "a means of fellowship with Christ:" and in that high and holy and mutual fellowship it brings God's people very near to one another. As says the author of "Ecce Homo": "As a meeting or communion it is clearly designed to express a certain fellowship between those who share it."

It has likewise been termed the Eucharist. Eucharist is from *εὐχαρίστια*,

a giving of thanks, thanksgiving. Our Redeemer gave thanks on the evening of its first solemnization. So, too, thanks are offered by His followers before the distribution of the emblems. The Lord's table should surely be a place for thankful praise and grateful remembrance.

To me this rite seems to point three ways. It points backward to our Saviour's sufferings, to His body broken and His blood shed. It points upward to Him as now the living, loving and interceding Saviour. And it points forward to His glorious second advent, His splendid epiphany at the last day.

In the second chapter of the Acts it is said respecting the Pentecostal converts that "they continued steadfastly in the apostle's teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers . . . And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home," etc. (verses 42, 46). By some this "breaking of bread" is not thought to allude to the Lord's Supper, while by others it is con-

sidered as having reference to that rite. One writer says:

“In the account given by the writer of the Acts of the life of the first disciples at Jerusalem, a prominent place is given to this act and to the phrase which indicated it. He describes the baptized members of the church as continuing steadfast in or to the teaching of the apostles, in fellowship with them and with each other, and in *breaking of bread* and in prayers (Acts ii. 42). We can scarcely doubt that this implies that the chief actual meal of each day was one in which they met as brothers, and which was either preceded or followed by the more solemn commemorative acts of the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup. It will be convenient to anticipate the language and the thoughts of a somewhat later date, and to say that, apparently, they thus united every day the Agape or feast of love with the celebration of the Eucharist” (*Smith's Bib. Dic.*)

In Acts xx. 7, we read: “And upon the

first day of the week when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow." The Syriac here has it: "When we assembled to break the eucharist." On the term "to break bread," Hervey writes:

"This is also an important example of weekly communion as the practice of the first Christians. Comparing the phrase, 'to break bread,' with S. Luke's account of the institution of the Holy Eucharist (Luke xxii. 19), and the passages just quoted in Luke xxiv (verses 1, 30, 35), and St. Paul's language (I Cor. x. 16; xi. 24), it is impossible not to conclude that the breaking of bread in the celebration of the Lord's Supper is an essential part of the holy sacrament, which man may not for any specious reasons omit. Further, this passage seems to indicate that evening communion, after the example of the first Lord's Supper, was at this time the practice of the church. It was preceded by the preaching of the Word. The following

description, given by Justin Martyr . . . of the church assemblies in his day, not a hundred years after this time, is in exact agreement with it: 'On the day which is called Sunday, all (Christians) who dwell either in town or country come together to one place. The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read for a certain time, and then the president of the meeting, when the reader has stopped, makes a discourse, in which he instructs and exhorts the people to the imitation of the good deeds of which they have just heard. We then all rise up together, and address prayers (to God); and, when our prayers are ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president, to the best of his ability, offers up both prayers and thanksgivings, and the people assent, saying "amen." And then the distribution of the bread and wine, over which the thanksgivings have been offered, is made to all present and all partake of it.' "

We praise the dear Lord for the com-

munion. No other institution is like it in its simple beauty, blest significance, soul-melting power, joyous solemnity, and sweet, sad tenderness. May we ever partake of the sacred elements with humble, reverent and grateful hearts!

CHAPTER VI.

PRAYER.

WHAT an institution is prayer! How we should praise God for it! How dark, sometimes, and how cheerless would everything around us be if it were not for prayer! When peculiar circumstances have greatly distressed us, when some overwhelming sorrow has come into the life, when the heart is broken and bleeding and is quivering in the intensity of its own anguish, what a balm then is prayer. When the path is dark before us and we know not how to proceed, how the devout soul can turn with grateful confidence to the altar of prayer. When the perplexing clouds of uncertainty or doubt have hovered over us with their midnight wings and inclosed us in their gloomy pall, what a rift is

made in those clouds and how the light streams in when we betake ourselves to believing prayer.

Prayer is a divine institution. God himself has granted to us the blessed privilege of approaching Him. More than this, He teaches us and exhorts us to call upon His holy name. "Call upon me in the day of trouble," says the Lord (Ps. l. 15). "They shall call on my name," He says, "and I will hear them" (Zech. xiii. 9). Said Jesus: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. vii. 7, 8).

The human heart naturally goes out to a higher power. There is in humanity a certain feeling after the Infinite. And when a person is properly instructed in the glorious reality of one true and ever-living God, the Creator and Sustainer of all things, then, if he is wise, the craving of the heart may meet its satisfying

portion. The Eternal One has not created so high an aspiration in the human heart and no way in which it can be met. He has provided the means whereby the longing heart can meet its desire. In communion with Him rest and blessedness are found.

There are different kinds of prayer. There may be the prayer which is nearly all adoration, the sincere act of a worshiping heart going out in homage to God. There may be the prayer of thanksgiving, the prayer which praises and gives thanks for mercies granted and for blessings received. There may be the true petitioning prayer, an earnest supplication for desired favors. There may be the resting prayer, when the soul, having cast itself upon the mercy of God, confidently rests there and nestles closely in submissive love to the compassionate heart of the heavenly Father. There may be the prayer which is a combination of these various elements. And this latter, perhaps, is the more frequent.

Prayer is proper and beneficial in many

ways and on various occasions. There is the time when the pious mind gets alone with God for secret meditation and sweet personal communion. There is the sacredness of the family altar, when those whose hearts are the most closely united bow together in humble devotion before the Author of all good. There is the time when a few kindred spirits come together and fervently pour their united praise and petition into the ear of a listening and loving Jehovah. There are the weekly or semiweekly social services when those of like precious faith assemble for song and prayer and testimony. And on the Sabbath and at other times in the sacred precincts of the sanctuary there is the public and more formal (but we trust no less devout) invocation by the gospel minister. On such times the hearts of all the people should sympathize with the vocal petition and mentally join with it. Besides all this, there is the "praying without ceasing," the continual lifting of the heart to God and the breathing to Him of unuttered prayer.

We need to pray for ourselves. If we desire the guiding of the Lord, if we desire strength from Him, it is our sweet privilege "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to let our requests be made known unto God" (Phil. iv. 6). We should pray for those who are near and dear to us, for the local church of which we are members, for the gospel work in our own community, in our own country, and for the missionary work throughout the whole world. There is ever enough to pray for.

Two things appear absolutely necessary for the Christian life and spiritual good of every intelligent follower of Jesus. These two things are the perusal of the Bible and prayer. The former, as has often been remarked, is God talking to us; the latter is our talking with God. As what God says is more important than what we say, the reading of the Bible may be said to be the more important of the two. But of one thing we feel assured, viz., the truly devout mind that delights to linger

in study and meditation over the pages of the blessed Book—such a one will be eminently a praying person. Says Henry: “It is taken for granted that all the disciples pray. You may as soon find a living man that does not breathe, as a living Christian that does not pray. If prayerless, then graceless.”

The book of Acts contains many allusions to prayer. It goes without saying that it would be advantageous to believing hearts to give studious and reverent regard to the rich experiences of the early Christians on this line. Let us, then, briefly attend to those experiences. We note, first, the primitive Christians were praying Christians. They diligently and fervently applied themselves to prayer. With them it is evident that prayer was more than a duty—it was a precious privilege. They were found often at the throne of God. They sometimes, as it were, besieged Jehovah with their urgent petitions. Their fervid supplications ascended to heaven on the wings of faith. As a result they re-

ceived answers that could not be gainsaid.

It is recorded of the disciples in those pregnant days intervening between the Lord's ascension and the Spirit's Pentecostal outpouring, that "These all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren" (Acts i. 14). They were not only tarrying, but praying. We read of the Pentecostal converts that they not only "continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship," but also "in the breaking of bread and the prayers" (ii. 42). In chapter nine the early disciples are designated as those "that call upon this name," *i.e.*, Jesus' name (verse 14); and again as "them which called on this name" (verse 21). They were known as men and women who prayed. Cornelius was praying when he had the visit of the angel (x. 30).

When a murmuring arose regarding the daily ministration of temporal things, the twelve, seeing it would not

be proper for them to forsake their spiritual functions and serve tables, advised the appointing of fit persons for that special work; but of themselves they said: "But we will continue steadfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word" (vi. 4). Some modern preachers might do well to follow in this respect the apostolic example. They might do more praying and preaching, and not so much serving of tables by the interest they take in ungodly church socials, parties, suppers, etc.

The first Christians prayed for special guidance, for needed grace, for particular blessings. Thus we remark them asking the Lord to show which of a certain two He had chosen to take the place of Judas (i. 23-27). In chapter iv. 23-31 is the narration of an interesting event. The company of believers "lifted up their voice with one accord," and called upon God to grant them courage and spiritual power in the face of opposition and threatenings. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein

they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness" (verse 31). When, through the instrumentality of Philip, Samaria had received the gospel, the apostles Peter and John were sent there. They "prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus" (viii. 15, 16). And when Peter was incarcerated, we are told that "prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him" (xii. 5). Then came the angelic deliverance. Peter proceeded immediately to the house of Mary, where he found that "many were gathered together and were praying" (verse 12). The prayers of the Christians appear in this instance to have been answered far beyond their expectations, as they would not at first believe that it actually was Peter knocking at the gate.

The early Christians prayed for those

who were set apart for any special purpose. Thus when they chose the seven deacons we read: "Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them" (vi. 6). When Barnabas and Saul were separated for their peculiar work from the other prophets and teachers who were at Antioch, we are told: "Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away" (xiii. 3). When Paul and Barnabas afterward "appointed for them elders in every church," we note that when they "had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed" (xiv. 23).

Let us give attention to the prayers of Peter. That this earnest worker was a man of much prayer is manifest. He had, when closely associated with Jesus, taken lessons in the necessity and efficacy of prayer. And now that his Master, after leaving directions for prayer to be offered in His name, had gone to the heavenly country, we can be sure

that a person of Peter's temperament would avail himself of the privilege. This thought is borne out by the following: "Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour" (iii. 1). "The ninth hour," says the Rev. H. Cowles, D.D., "was the time of the evening sacrifice, at which many resorted to the temple for their personal and in a sense private devotions." With Peter and the other apostles this was probably a common practice. Undoubtedly this particular instance is specially recorded because of the healing of the lame man.

The historian gives, also, an incident when "Peter went up upon the housetop to pray" (x. 9). This sentence speaks forth a great deal. The getting alone to pray was evidently a custom of the great gospel herald. Probably he was often closeted with God, holding glad communion with his heavenly Father. And on the occasion to which allusion is now made, he received a new revelation from the Lord. By means of the vision of the

sheet let down from heaven, Peter was shown that he should not call a man common or unclean simply because he was not a Jew, but that the salvation of Jesus was of equal avail to both Jew and Gentile. When, later, he relates the occurrence, he says it was while he "was in the city of Joppa praying" (xi. 5). God often meets with men when they are "praying."

Before Peter turns to the lifeless form of Dorcas and with authority says, "Tabitha, arise," it is related of him that first he "kneeled down, and prayed" (ix. 40). Scott here says: "He went alone into the room where she lay, and there prevailed by prayer for her restoration to life."

Of the fact that others had respect for Peter's faith and power in prayer, we have an example in the case of the magician Simon. Overawed and crushed for the time being beneath the weight of the apostle's stern rebuke, the alarmed sorcerer cries out: "Pray ye for me to the Lord, that none of the things which ye have spoken come upon me" (viii. 24).

We now give heed to Paul as a man of prayer. This wonderful man was one who prevailed with God in prayer. The man who directed the Romans and the Colossians to continue "steadfastly in prayer" (Rom. xii. 12; Col. iv. 2), who urged the Ephesians to pray "with all prayer and supplication at all seasons" (Eph. vi. 18), who exhorted the Thessalonians to "pray without ceasing"—such a man must have known by experience the sweets and triumphs of prevailing prayer.

As a praying man the first that is recorded of Paul is in the words of Jesus spoken from heaven to Ananias: "For behold, he prayeth" (ix. 11). As a zealous Pharisee Paul had undoubtedly prayed many times before; but now, since that midday manifestation of Jesus, the persecuting Pharisee was agonizing in prayer as he never had prayed before. With what glad result we know.

We have in Acts the relation of Paul's midnight prayer meeting in the Philip-

pian prison. "But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them" (xvi. 25). Though in a seemingly deplorable condition, with aching backs and stock-fastened feet and incarcerated bodies, yet Paul and his godly companion could pray and sing hymns unto God. And there came an earth-shaking answer, which resulted in the conversion of the jailer and his family.

After instructing and charging the Ephesian elders, Paul, in bidding them farewell, "kneeled down, and prayed with them all" (xx. 26). So, also, when Paul's company parted from the Tyrian Christians the chronicler relates: "And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed, and bade each other farewell" (xxi. 5, 6). In his speech from the castle stairs, Paul tells the Jews of his praying in the temple, when he fell into a trance, receiving a communication from Christ (xxii. 17, 18). When the apostle prevailed upon the storm-tossed company in the

helpless ship to take some food, we are told that "he gave thanks to God in the presence of all" (xxvii. 35). Before Paul, in healing the father of Publius, laid his hands upon him, it is stated that he "prayed" (xxviii. 8). Prevailing in prayer as he did, it is no wonder that in his epistles he speaks so earnestly of prayer. He practiced what he so imperatively preached. He preached what he so effectually practiced.

In Acts vii. 59, 60 is preserved a fragment of the dying petition of Stephen the proto-martyr. He makes request for himself and also for those who so cruelly murdered him. We read: "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." Note the following from Clarke: "I cannot close these observations without making one remark on his prayer for his murderers. Though this shows most forcibly the amiable,

forgiving spirit of the martyr; yet we must not forget that this, and all the excellent qualities with which the mind of this blessed man was endued, proceeded from that Holy Ghost, of whose influences his mind was full. The prayer therefore shows most powerfully the matchless benevolence of God. Even these most unprincipled, most impious, and most brutal of all murderers, were not out of the reach of His mercy! His Spirit influenced the heart of this martyr to pray for his destroyers; and could such prayers fail? No: Saul of Tarsus, in all probability, was the first fruits of them. . . . Let this example teach us at once the spirit that becomes a disciple of Christ, the efficacy of prayer, and the unbounded philanthropy of God."

This examination of prayer in the Acts is comparatively brief and cursory, yet it should stimulate us in the right direction. If, in the opening days of the gospel dispensation, much fervent and effectual prayer ascended to the Giver of

all good; so, in this dispensation's closing days, should the true worshipers be engaged much in holy communion with high Heaven. May we be found "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer." And it might be well if we all retained in memory these words of Jeremy Taylor: "He that would pray with effect must live with care and piety."

CHAPTER VII.

MISSIONARY ACTIVITY.

IN our days we are familiar with the thought of missionary work. This nineteenth century has been pre-eminently a century of missions. The church has been arousing, as from a protracted lethargy, to the necessity of missionary effort. Though not so much has been done as should have been done, yet we have reason for gratitude that so much has been accomplished. The Scriptures, or portions of them, have been translated into many languages and published in the vernacular of the people. Brave, ardent, consecrated missionaries, taking their lives in their hand, have gone forth with the message of salvation. Unknown lands have been explored, new fields have been opened, and the light of the gospel

has illumined many of the dark regions of the earth. The prediction of our Saviour may be said to be well nigh accomplished: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. xxiv. 14).

To some extent the spiritual condition of a church may be gauged by its missionary activities and enterprises. I believe it was Dr. A. J. Gordon who said that the church which is not a *mission* church will soon be a *missing* church. And the point here is evidently well taken. Those surely do not exhibit a great deal of spiritual life who are supinely content when they deem themselves to be safe, and are not earnestly interested in the salvation of others. And that church is spiritually defunct whose broadening sympathies are not reaching out in widening circles toward those who are yet beyond the pale of the gospel.

But if the present century has been an

era of extensive mission operations, it is certain, also, that the first century of Christianity was a period of missionary activity. Many of the early preachers were missionaries. They carried the gospel into the "regions beyond." And in the book of Acts may be seen exhibitions of missionary zeal and of grand missionary success.

The Rev. G. F. Maclear, D.D., writes: "Christian missions had their origin in the example and the command of our Lord Himself (Matt. xxviii. 19); and the unparalleled boldness on the part of the Founder of Christianity, which dared to anticipate for the Christian faith a succession of efforts which should never cease to cause its propagation to be undertaken as 'a distinct and direct work,' has been justified by the voice of history. Whereas other religions have spread from country to country as component parts of popular opinion, have traveled with migration or conquest, have passed in the train of things and by the usual channels of communication, the first

foundations of the church had hardly been laid before individual missionary activity marked the life of each one of the circle of the apostles" (*Encyc. Brit.*, Vol. 16, p. 511).

In the very first chapter of Acts we are led to see that our Saviour intended the church to be a missionary church and the gospel workers to be missionary workers. In that wonderful eighth verse is contained the germ of mission activity. Jesus said: "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." We see from this that the gospel was not to be confined within the narrow borders of Jewry, but was ultimately to be carried "unto the uttermost part of the earth." Though it was destined to begin at Jerusalem, it was not to take up an exclusive and conservative residence there. It must be witnessed "in all Judæa;" it must go to "Samaria;" it must reach at last to the utmost

bounds of the inhabited world. As it would not be believed without being heard, as it could not be heard without being preached, and as they could not preach without being sent, therefore it was that Jesus gave to His followers the world-wide commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark xvi. 16). They are informed that in all lands they shall be His witnesses. As a necessary fitting for this work, Jesus tells them of the power to be received when the Holy Spirit should come upon them.

"They went out," says the Rev. A. McLean, D.D., "and preached everywhere. The church was one vast missionary organization. Every proselyte was a propagandist. Soldiers, merchants and travelers carried the gospel far and near. The Lord was with them, and confirmed the word with the signs that followed."

This witnessing began at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost when there were present "devout men from every nation

under heaven" (ii. 5). Of the three thousand who were converted on that memorable occasion, it is safe to conjecture that some of the converts were from distant lands. It is safe to conjecture, also, that on their return to their homes they carried with them the gospel which they had received. Possibly some of them became missionaries in lands far distant from the holy city. As another says: "Many of the three thousand would become messengers to prepare the way of the Lord in heathen lands" (*Prof. R. A. Redford*).

It may be that at first the Christians confined their efforts in too small a compass. Engrossed with the gospel's triumphs at Jerusalem, they may not have been properly filling the commission given unto them. The persecution, therefore, which arose against the church after the death of Stephen resulted in the scattering abroad of the Christians. Perhaps the Lord overruled the persecution to the getting of laborers into new regions. As a result, at any rate, we are

told that they "that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word" (viii. 4). As Wordsworth pungently puts it: "Being scattered abroad by persecution they scattered abroad the seed of the word." In chapter eleven it is further recorded: "They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord" (verses 19-21).

We have the account of Philip's missionary success in the city of Samaria. So great a work was there accomplished that "there was much joy in that city" (viii. 5-8). And after Philip's experience with the eunuch in the desert, it is said: "But Philip was found at Azotus: and

passing through he preached the gospel to all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea" (viii. 40). As regards this eunuch himself, "he is reported to have preached the gospel to the Ethiopians" (*Hervey*). If this is so, he became one of the earliest missionaries to the Gentiles.

Not much information is given in the Acts concerning the missionary labors of Peter. His Jerusalem work certainly would not be designated as missionary work. We are told, though, of his going "throughout all parts" (ix. 32). But we deem this as being more of an official, apostolic visitation to the various churches than as actual missionary work. His visit to Cæsarea, however, to open to the Gentiles the door of the gospel, may be somewhat more on the line of real missionary labor. But it is evident that even there his labor, though gloriously successful, was comparatively transient.

Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew, is mentioned as an eloquent or learned man

and mighty in the Scriptures. He spent some time at Ephesus, speaking and teaching the things of the Lord. Here it was that Aquila and Priscilla took him unto themselves and expounded unto him more carefully the way of God. After this he passed over into Achaia, and spent some time in those regions helping the brethren and confuting the Jews (xviii. 24-28).

We have in the Acts the accounts of Paul's missionary itineraries. In the church at Antioch there were several prophets and teachers. While these were engaged in their devotions, they were directed by the Holy Spirit to separate Barnabas and Saul (Paul) for the work to which they were called. That work was special missionary work. So forth they went, accompanied by John Mark. On their first trip in pursuance of the divine call, they prosecuted gospel labors "through the whole island" of Cyprus (xiii. 6), at Antioch in Pisidia (verse 14), at Iconium (xiv. 1). They also "preached the gospel" at "Lystra

and Derbe, and the region round about" (xiv. 6, 7). And on their return journey they spoke "the word in Perga" (xiv. 25). Returning to the city from which they had set out, they rehearsed to the assembled church "all things that God had done with them" (xiv. 27). As Stalker touchingly says: "Worn with toil and suffering, but flushed with the joy of success, they appeared among those who had sent them forth and had doubtless been following them with their prayers; and, like discoverers returned from the finding of a new world, they related the miracles of grace they had witnessed in the strange world of the heathen."

During this successful tour they did not have everything run so smoothly as might have been desired. The opposition they met and the tribulations they endured would have effectually discouraged men of less holy zeal and godly energy, and might have caused them to conclude that the Lord had not called them to that work and into those

fields. But they persevered, and so were blessedly used of the Lord in the salvation of many souls and in the founding of a number of churches. At Paphos, as we know, they were withstood by the sorcerer Elymas. At Perga they were deserted by Mark. At Pisidian Antioch a persecution was stirred up against them, and they were cast out (xiii. 50). So, too, from Iconium they were obliged to flee (xiv. 5, 6). At Lystra Paul was stoned until his enemies thought his life was extinct (xiv. 19). But it appears that these big-hearted missionaries expected such harsh treatment. For in their confirming the souls of the disciples and when exhorting them to continue in the faith, the apostles informed them that "through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God" (xiv. 22).

On his second missionary journey Paul left Antioch accompanied by Silas. They "went through Syria and Cilicia," also "through the region of Phrygia and Galatia" (xvi. 6). While at Lystra they

were joined by Timothy (xvi. 1-3). By the Spirit they were forbidden to preach in Asia and in Bithynia (xvi. 6-8). While at Troas, where it is evident they were joined by Luke, they were called by God through a vision to go into Macedonia (xvi. 9, 10). This was a great event in their lives, and in the history of the world. The gospel was to be carried into Europe. So into Europe they went, and proclaimed at Philippi, Thessalonica, Beræa, Athens and Corinth the good news of a crucified and risen Redeemer. Paul then went to Ephesus in Syria, to Cæsarea, to Jerusalem, after which he returned to Antioch. On this tour, also, they had met with opposition and persecution; but, persevering in the glad work, they had seen glorious results springing from their mission endeavors.

After spending some time in Antioch, the zealous missionary again sought other fields. Again "the region of Galatia and Phrygia" is blessed by his apostolic presence (xviii. 23). Again he goes to Ephesus, this time for a pro-

tracted stay. Here it was that he reasoned "daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks" (xix. 9, 10). Leaving Ephesus he went through the parts of Macedonia, and then labored in Greece for three months (xx. 1-3). After this he makes his way to Jerusalem where he is set upon by the Jews, and then apprehended by the Romans. Later, as a prisoner, he is sent to Rome. Here, at the world's metropolis, "he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him" (xxviii. 31). And thus, so far as the Acts are concerned, ended the missionary labors of perhaps the most successful missionary of all time.

We have thus briefly recounted some of the mission activities of the first missionary workers. They had a righteous

zeal for God. Their labors were signally blessed. Though they met with abuse and calumny, they yet pressed forward in the great work to which they had been called. Their mission was divine, and they so recognized it. After the lapse of eighteen centuries the world has not recovered from the elevating influence of their noble work.

Their missionary activity should still be a lesson to the Christians of our time. Their brave example is well worthy of emulation. As then there were ardent souls willing to leave their local churches and their home comforts and go into lands where salvation's glad tidings had never been heard, so should it be now. And, thank God, so it is now. But may it increase more and more! And may those who remain behind be ever ready to aid the work abroad by their prayers, and in that more substantial way—by their means! In the missionary work faith and works go together blessedly well. Let not this part of it be forgotten.

CHAPTER VIII.

ANGELIC MINISTRY.

THAT there are actual beings known as angels every pious heart believes. There is, in fact, "an innumerable company of angels" (Heb. xii. 22). They are spiritual creatures of an order higher than man. They are said to be "greater in power and might" (II Peter ii. 11). Of man it is said that he was made "a little lower than the angels" (Ps. viii. 5). The angels, too, were undoubtedly created before men. The Lord said to Job: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job xxxviii. 4, 7).

We append the following relevant citation from Dr. John Kitto: "In the Scriptures we have frequent notices of spirit-

ual intelligences, existing in another state of being, and constituting a celestial family, or hierarchy, over which Jehovah presides. The Bible does not, however, treat of this matter professedly and as a doctrine of religion, but merely adverts to it incidentally as a fact, without furnishing any detail to gratify curiosity. It speaks of no obligations to these spirits, and indicates no duties to be performed toward them. A belief in the existence of such beings is not, therefore, an essential article of religion, any more than a belief that there are other worlds besides our own; but such a belief serves to enlarge our ideas of the work of God, and to illustrate the greatness of His power and wisdom." Further on he says: "In the Scriptures angels appear with bodies, and in the human form; and no intimation is anywhere given that these bodies are not real, or that they are only assumed for the time and then laid aside. It was manifest indeed to the ancients that the matter of these bodies was not like that of their own, inasmuch

as angels could make themselves visible and vanish again from their sight. But this experience would suggest no doubt of the reality of their bodies; it would only intimate that they were not composed of gross matter. After His resurrection, Jesus often appeared to His disciples, and vanished again before them; yet they never doubted that they saw the same body which had been crucified, although they must have perceived that it had undergone an important change."

The holy angels have high privileges. They have entrance to heaven and nearness to the Infinite One. Nehemiah speaks of "the host of heaven" as worshiping God (Neh. ix. 6). The angelic being who appeared to Zacharias said: "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God" (Luke i. 19). Jesus said: "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 10). The Rt. Rev. E. H. Browne says: "There are doubtless hosts of spiritual beings that surround the throne of God and do His will,"

The holy angels are God's ministers or messengers. They are sent by Him on missions of mercy, and also on errands of destruction. They are spoken of as those "that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word." They are called "ministers of His, that do His pleasure" (Ps. ciii. 20, 21). Kitto says: "The ministry of angels, or that they are employed by God as the instruments of His will, is very clearly taught in the Scriptures."

As we have intimated, their work may sometimes be destructive. Angels were sent to Sodom not only to warn Lot, but also to desolate the place (Gen. xix. 13). And at the time of the exode of the children of Israel, when in every house of the Egyptians there was one slain, a "destroyer" was dispatched on the errand (Ex. xii. 23; Heb. xi. 28). When David presumptuously numbered Israel, and seventy thousand were consequently slain by pestilence, the angel of the Lord seems to have had charge of the work of destruction (I Chron. xxi. 14-16). When

the army of Sennacherib was slain in order to save the holy city, when one hundred and eighty-five thousand men were death-smitten in one night, we are informed that it was the work of "the angel of the Lord" (II Kings xix. 35).

On deeds of mercy the angels are sent when they come to help or instruct the children of men. Thus when Hagar fled from her mistress (Gen. xvi. 6-12), and when she and Ishmael were distressed in the wilderness (xxi. 17), there was merciful angelic interference. When to the patriarch Abraham came that mighty test of faith, when upon the altar his beloved son was bound and when the knife was raised all ready for the deadly stroke, like a sound of heavenly music came to his ears the angel's voice, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad" (Gen. xxii. 12). An angel wrestled with Jacob until the breaking of the day, and before his departure left a blessing behind (Gen. xxxii. 24-29; Hos. xii. 4). Angelic messengers were sent forth to give skill and understanding to the prophet Daniel

(Dan. ix. 22; x. 14). The birth of Samson, the judge of Israel, was announced by a heavenly visitant. So, too, the births of our Lord's forerunner and of the Lord himself were preannounced by angelic herald. And when the world's Saviour in due time was born, "a multitude of the heavenly host" sang in glad refrain in the hearing of startled men. And years after His ascension He sent by an angel and signified His Revelation unto His servant John.

Angels have consoled, strengthened and protected God's saints. In the fiery furnace the form of the fourth, who was like to a son of the gods, was undoubtedly the form of an angel (Dan. iii. 25, 28). The prophet in the den of hungry lions was marvelously preserved from injury, and in these words he tells the sleepless king the reason: "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me" (Dan. vi. 22).

Angels ministered unto our blessed Redeemer in the days of His earthly pil-

grimage. After His temptation, when the devil left Him, "behold, angels came and ministered unto Him" (Matt. iv. 11). At the midnight hour when He bowed before God in agonizing prayer, when His soul was sorrowful even unto death, when in His heart-anguish He sweat as it were great drops of blood, "there appeared an angel unto Him, strengthening Him" (Luke xxii. 43). At His apprehension He could, had He so desired, have had present to assist Him more than twelve legions of angels (Matt. xxvi. 53). And, at His ascension, two beings brightly clothed told of His intended return.

The seraphic hosts are to attend Christ at His glorious advent, (Matt. xxv. 31). They are the reapers who are to gather the wicked for the last burning (Matt. xiii. 41, 42). They will be sent forth to gather all the righteous together (Matt. xxiv. 31). Wonderful beings are they, and great is their work!

In the book of Acts there are some accounts of the ministrations of these che-

rubic beings. It may be helpful to us to give our attention to these records of angelic succor and revelation.

We read of the apprehension of the apostles Peter and John, and of their being put in public ward. Then comes angelic intervention. We give the exact words of Luke: "But an angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them out, and said, Go ye, and stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this Life. And when they heard this, they entered into the temple about daybreak, and taught" (Acts v. 19-21). Here is direct deliverance by the hand of an angel.

In the seventh chapter, Stephen speaks of the angel that appeared to Moses in the burning bush; of "the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai," and of the law as having been "ordained by angels" (verses 30, 35, 38, 53). This is the New Testament mention of Old Testament occurrences.

In Acts viii. 26, 27, are these words: "But an angel of the Lord spake unto

Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert. And he arose and went." We here have narrated to us how a zealous and successful evangelist was directed by an angel to a new field of operations. And we see that the field to which he was angel-guided was such a one as no mere man ever would have thought of selecting. The evangelist's obedience and the consequent success of the mission are also recorded in the rest of the chapter.

In the bringing of the gospel to the Gentiles, an angel holds a very prominent place. The angel did not himself preach the gospel. That is not the business of an angel. But he put the Gentiles in the way of having just the proper preacher come and instruct them. Let us read: "Now there was a certain man in Cæsarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms

to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision openly, as it were about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in unto him, and saying to him, Cornelius. And he, fastening his eyes upon him, and being affrighted, said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and fetch one Simon, who is surnamed Peter: he lodgeth with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the seaside. And when the angel that spake unto him was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; and having rehearsed all things unto them, he sent them to Joppa'' (x. 1-8). Then comes the account of Peter's housetop vision of the sheet, which vision prepared his mind for what followed. At verse 22 is recorded what the messengers said to Peter: "And they said, Cornelius a centurion, a righteous man and one that feareth God, and well reported of by all

the nation of the Jews, was warned of God by a holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words from thee." The result we know.

A very wonderful and quite a detailed account of angelic intervention is vouchsafed to us in chapter twelve. It tells of the release of Peter from the prison. Notwithstanding he was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, the prison doors fastened, and guards outside—notwithstanding all this precaution, Peter was released by the angel. Luke thus tells the marvelous story: "And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the cell: and he smote Peter on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed; and he wist not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a

vision. And when they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth into the city; which opened to them of its own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and straightway the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth His angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews" (xii. 7-11).

In this same chapter is an incident of the destructive agency of an angel toward an enemy of Christ. Herod had killed James and would undoubtedly have treated Peter in the same way had it not been for the angelic interference which we have noted. After the apostle's strange release from custody the king departed from Judæa and abode in Cæsarea. Then is given the following narrative: "Now he was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon, and they came with one accord to him,

and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, they asked for peace, because their country was fed from the king's country. And upon a set day Herod arrayed himself in royal apparel, and sat on the throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people shouted, saying, The voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost" (xii. 20-23).

In the next to the last chapter of the Acts, the sacred historian gives details of that disastrous voyage of the ship in which Paul, as a prisoner, was being conveyed to Rome. Driven for days by the fury of a tempestuous wind over a stormy sea in an unmanageable vessel, all hope of being saved was taken away. Then it was that a seraphic minister from glory gave cheering information to the faithful Paul. As E. A. Stockman eloquently puts it: "At dead of night, in the darkness and the gloom, an unseen

holy one mounted the wings of the tempest at its wildest mood; and treading the mad winds beneath his feet, passed swiftly to the laboring and helpless vessel." But we will let the inspired narration tell its own interesting story: "And when they had been long without food, then Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have set sail from Crete, and have gotten this injury and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God whose I am, whom also I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Cæsar: and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken unto me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island" (xxvii. 21-26). With the fulfillment of this angelic prediction we are all acquainted.

To another matter in the Acts pertaining to angels we will give attention. The prevailing opinion appears to be that the unfallen angels are beings of a sort of supernatural brightness. Barnes makes the observation: "But light and splendor and shining apparel are commonly represented as the accompaniments of the heavenly beings when they visit the earth." This opinion certainly seems to be corroborated by some things which we meet in this book. We have already seen how a heavenly messenger called an angel appeared to the pious Cornelius. In relating this incident to Peter, he says: "A man stood before me in bright apparel" (x. 30). He who is four times called an angel is now alluded to as a man. This is evidently not because it was really a human being, but that his general appearance was like a man. But notice, he was in "bright apparel."

If, at our Lord's ascension, the two "men" who stood at the disciples' side were angels, as we certainly take them

to be, it may be noted of them also, that they were in "white apparel."

When the holy Stephen stood before his judges "all that sat in the council fastening their eyes on him saw his face as it had been the face of an angel" (vi. 15). Some expositors deem that the face of Stephen "was made to shine supernaturally by a visible glory like that of Moses." Others think it resembled that of an angel in the aspect of "majesty and divine grace." Lechler says: "His countenance was lighted up as with an angelic radiance revealing not only the courage of a man, a divine inspiration, and holy serenity of the soul, but also the brightness of a preternatural light. The language of Luke certainly implies far more than that the countenance of Stephen indicated the utmost tranquillity in-somuch that the spectators involuntarily looked on him with reverence; it obviously describes an objective, and indeed, an extraordinary phenomenon." If this is the true idea, it tends to indicate that the angelic aspect is one of brightness.

When "an angel of the Lord stood by" the imprisoned Peter, it is immediately added; "And a light shined in the cell" (xii. 7). "This light," says Alexander, "may have proceeded from the angel." Whedon observes: "The angel brings to the prisoner no lantern, lamp or candle; yet he brings a light, the beaming of his own person."

These instances we present as they are given. They may be at least collateral proof of the personal supernatural brightness of the angel ministers. (See Matt. xxviii. 3; Luke xxiv. 4).

Having now given our attention to these things concerning the past ministrations of angels, it may not be out of place if we affirm that the holy angels even yet may have their allotted duties among men. Undoubtedly in our day, as well as in bygone times, "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke xv. 10). And they may yet be interested in the welfare of humanity. They may still guide and protect those who are the

objects of the Father's favor. May it not even now be true that "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them?" (Ps. xxxiv. 7). May God not still "give His angels charge over" those whom He loves? (Ps. xci. 11, 12). Even in this age of the world, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?" (Heb. i. 14). As the Rev. M. S. Terry, D. D. remarks: "Such angelic personages are often around us in their ministrations of judgment or of love, but rarely have they been allowed to manifest themselves to human vision."

As the holy angels are yet alive they doubtless still have their part to perform in the great universe of God. During these eighteen centuries, fraught with so much that is weighty and momentous, it is almost incredible that they should have been mere inactive spectators. While man has been doing his part in the wide arena of existence, is it thinkable that the angels have had no part to per-

form in the affairs of earth? As to angelic ministry, has the Almighty entirely changed His mode of operation? It is not impossible; but we think it improbable. In the first of this dispensation the angels were ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of the heirs of salvation. Probably throughout the dispensation they will have similar work to do. And though unseen to-day, they may still be busily occupied with their ministrations of mercy and care. We see no reason why they should not. We know no biblical authority that they are not. So we believe they are active to-day in their God-ordained ministries to men. As says the Rev. D. Young: "Nor is it to be said that angelic service has ceased. Angels may render very important and comforting services to men, although they themselves may not be seen."

This fact of present angelic ministration ought to aid in solving for us the great and alarming question of modern unchristian Spiritualism. According to

the Bible there are bad angels as well as good. There are the angels of the devil as well as angels of the Lord. In Matt. xxv. 41 we read of "the devil and his angels." In II Peter ii. 4 we read of "the angels that sinned." While in Jude 6. we are informed of "angels which kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation."

These Scriptures are conclusive that there are evil angels. Now, if good angels can encamp round about them that fear the Lord (Ps. xxxiv. 7), and guide and protect and deliver them, so also the angels of darkness may have power to be present with the children of men. They may be able to deceive them and to lead them away from the truth. It may be possible for them to exert over men a sort of hypnotic influence, and thus bring them partly or wholly under their dark designing power. "And no marvel; for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light. It is no great thing, therefore, if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of

righteousness (II Cor. xi. 14, 15). In Conybeare and Howson's "Life of The Apostle Paul" the following sentiment is expressed: "We are content to express our belief that in the demoniacs of the New Testament allusion is really made to personal spirits who exercised power for evil purposes on the human will. The unregenerate world is represented to us in Scripture as a realm of darkness, in which the invisible agents of wickedness are permitted to hold sway under conditions and limitations which we are not able to define. The degrees and modes in which their presence is made visibly apparent may vary widely in different countries and in different ages."

It is a fact that God warned His ancient people against having anything to do with "the unfruitful works of darkness." Witchcraft, necromancy, etc., were condemned. In Lev. xix. 31 the admonition is given: "Turn ye not unto them that have familiar spirits, nor unto the wizards; seek them not out, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God."

The following warning is found in Deut. xviii. 9-12: "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found with thee any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, one that useth divination, one that practiceth augury, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For whosoever doeth these things is an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee."

It will not suffice to say of ancient necromancy and the consulting of familiar spirits that the whole thing was a sham. Though trickery and delusion were doubtless practiced then as now, yet this does not show that the things spoken against by God had no existence in reality. As Wordsworth says: "In these oracles and divinations of the Gentile world there were many frauds

and cheats. But counterfeits prove the reality; and phenomena of witchcraft in the heathen world are too numerous to be explained away." Scott remarks: "The existence, sagacity, malice, ambition and power of evil spirits, are sufficiently declared in Scripture: there can be no doubt, that they are both able and willing thus to interpose, if permitted: and that human nature is capable of such wickedness, as even *knowingly* to combine with them." And note what Dr. D. Steele says: "All the descriptions of the ancient necromancy are strikingly like the practices of *modern spirit-circles*."

Modern Spiritists claim that the controlling powers are the spirits of dead men and women. These return and make themselves known to the living. To say nothing of the nonsensicalness of this idea, it is directly contrary to the word of God. The Spiritists are themselves deceived. They are evidently sincere in thinking that the manifestations (when they are real, as at times they

undoubtedly are) are those of so-called disembodied human spirits. They themselves, however, are under deception. The demoniacal angels have deceived their own ardent devotees.

Some Christian people have been foolish enough to be hoodwinked by these spiritistic fallacies. But an appeal to the Bible should be sufficient to set them right. That those who die have no longer anything to do with the affairs of this mortal state, that they are wholly oblivious to all that is passing here, is certainly put beyond all doubt by the Scriptures. And those who appeal to the Bible to solve their doubts on this line will surely come to this conclusion. We read in Isaiah: "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto the wizards that chirp and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? on behalf of the living should they seek unto the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them" (viii. 19, 20).

Let us turn then to the law and to the testimony. And first, note well this saying of Job concerning him who has died: "His sons come to honor, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them" (xiv. 21). Bishop Patrick here paraphrases: "He knows not what passes." Barnes writes: "He is unacquainted with what is passing on the earth." While Dr. J. K. Burr comments: "The dead are ignorant of what takes place among the living."

Note well, also, the saying of the pious king Hezekiah. He supposed he was soon to die, but God graciously extended his life fifteen years. In Isaiah xxxviii. 9-11 we read: "The writing of Hezekiah, king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness I said, in the noontide of my days I shall go into the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world." Rosenmüller gives this

last clause: "I, associated with the inhabitants of the world of torpor, shall no more behold man." Says Dr. H. Bannister: "The import of the whole phrase, then, is, 'I, with those in the land of stillness, shall no more see man.' "

We may notice, too, the Lord's message to King Josiah as recorded in II Kings xxii. 20: "Therefore, behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace; neither shall thine eyes see all the evil which I will bring upon this place." How different this is from the opinions of some who, in modern times, call themselves Christians. They think that if Josiah did not see the evil come upon the land during his lifetime, he could nevertheless see it after his death. But the scriptural testimony tells a different story.

In Is. lxiii. 16 occur these words: "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not." According to this Abraham was ignorant of his descend-

ants and of what was going on among them. After his death he, at least, was not acquainted with the doings of the men living on the earth.

Having thus seen the fallacy of any intercommunication between living and dead, we now say that we consider modern spiritistic phenomena, when real, as being the work of those malignant spirits, the evil angels. "We learn from the Bible," says William Ramsey, "that there are both good and bad angels; that they are numerous; that they are intelligent; that they are strong; and as wickedness does not, necessarily, diminish the strength of men or angels, wicked angels may have as much physical strength after their fall as they had before it. If good angels can communicate with men, and if they can move heavy stones (Matt. xxviii. 2), and open prison doors, lock them up again (Acts xii. 7-19), may not evil angels do the same things? We see no reason why they may not. We believe they do." He further says: "We hesitate not to ex-

press our firm belief that the demons spoken of in the New Testament were fallen angels, under the control of Satan; and that the spiritual manifestations which are witnessed in this country and in various portions of the Christian world are in like manner the work of the same evil angels. This was the belief of the church in the first and second centuries, as to the demoniacal possessions then. Of this fact there is an abundance of proof."

There is, in the Acts, at least one such case of demoniacal possession. While at Philippi, Paul came in contact with it. At the apostles' command the evil spirit was compelled to dispossess its victim. We read: "And it came to pass, as we were going to the place of prayer, that a certain maid having a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. The same following after Paul and us cried out, saying, These men are servants of the Most High God, which proclaim unto you the way of salvation. And this she did for many

days. But Paul, being sore troubled, turned and said to the spirit, I charge thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out that very hour" (xvi. 16-18).

We may observe, also, that in chapter v. 16 mention is made of "them that were vexed with unclean spirits." And in viii. 7 we read of "those which had unclean spirits." In xix. 12 it is narrated that "the evil spirits went out" of those possessed. (See also verses 13-16). On the first of the passages above cited Prof. J. A. Alexander remarks: "The writer mentions a specific malady, because of its extraordinary prevalence at that time, its peculiarly distressing character, its strange complication of moral and physical disorder, and, above all, its mysterious connection with the unseen world and with another race of spirits. These are called unclean or impure in a moral sense, essentially equivalent to wicked, but suggesting more directly the idea of corruption, as existing in themselves and practiced upon others. These

are the *angels* or ministering spirits of the devil."

The baleful ministries of the demon spirits are now being exercised in the world. As the hypnotist controls his subjects by a strange influence; so, undoubtedly, spiritual mediums are brought under the occult influence of a mysterious power exercised over them by fallen angels. But those who willingly surrender themselves to an unnatural spiritual influence may not be the only ones who are the objects of demoniac attention. It was a holy apostle who said: "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. vi. 12). If even such a man as Paul wrestled against these "world-rulers," it may be that we ourselves shall not be exempt from the overtures of their satanic cunning. And it may be the better for us the farther we keep ourselves from the unholy influ-

ence of modern Spiritualism and Theosophy. The admonition of John is as good to-day as ever: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John iv. 1). The false prophets and wicked spirits would "lead astray if possible, even the elect" (Matt. xxiv. 24).

CHAPTER IX.

OUR LORD'S ADVENT.

By our Lord's advent we mean His second coming. His *first* advent or coming is in the past. He then was upon the earth and accomplished the work which the Father gave Him to do. He then was a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." He then "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." His first advent was a necessary event.

But He is to come again. His *second* advent is in the future. It is a part of prophecy which as yet remains unfulfilled. But as other prophecies respecting our Saviour have been so wonderfully accomplished, so, too, will be those predictions which refer to His final return. As His first coming was needful, so His second coming is actually essen-

tial. It is essential to the keeping of the word of God, to the raising of the dead, to the judgment of the world, to the glorification of the saints, etc.

As to the certainty of this event no doubt exists. And the orthodoxy of this doctrine is beyond dispute. It is embodied in the creeds of the evangelical churches throughout Christendom. It has ever been a tenet of the true church of Christ. And when we turn to the Bible we find the inspired record overflowing with testimonials of the Saviour's coming. The final advent is there clearly taught and repeatedly inculcated. And the book of Acts itself bears striking witness that Jesus is to reappear.

True, the passages in the Acts which allude to our Saviour's glorious reappearance are not numerous. Those passages, however, which do refer to it are plain. One is exceptionally so, being about the clearest enunciation in all the Bible of our blest Redeemer's return.

Chapter i. 1-11 should be read. We will adduce verses 9-11. "And when

He had said these things, as they were looking He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they were looking steadfastly into heaven as He went behold two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus which was received up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven."

This is a telling testimony. It stands unimpeached. It cannot be overthrown. And it is directly to the point and directly from heaven. The white-appareled beings had a heaven-born message. As such it should be accepted and most heartily believed.

They testify to the sureness of the Messiah's again coming. They proclaim that He "shall" come. This is sufficient for believing hearts. In view of such testimony Christians, notwithstanding the mockings of a disbelieving world, will hold as an article of their faith that the dear Redeemer is most assuredly to come again.

The heavenly visitants also assert the reality of the Saviour's advent. They show it to be a literal advent, a personal return. The actuality of His individual reappearance is forever settled by their words. The witness is that it is "this Jesus" who shall come. The Authorized Version gives it as "this same Jesus." It must, then, be himself in His own proper person. Nothing else can fill the picture; nothing but this can fulfill the prediction. But the prediction will be perfectly accomplished when "this Jesus" shall return, when "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven" (I Thes. iv. 16).

This is further corroborated by the additional statement that it is the Jesus "which was received up" who will at last be revealed. The One "who was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God" (Mark xvi. 19), is the One who died on the Cross and who later, with hands and feet and side "showed himself alive after His passion by many proofs." If, then, the One "re-

ceived up" is the One who is to come (as it assuredly is), we know it must be the personal Christ. In no other way can the Scriptures meet their accomplishment.

We are yet further assured that He "shall so come in like manner" as He was perceived to go. Note the word "so" and the term "in like manner." In some sense He must "so" come. After some fashion He will "in like manner" return. This must show beyond all doubt the personality of His last advent. By many expositors it is taken, also, as showing that He will come in clouds. "A cloud received Him out of their sight," (verse 9). And as the Scriptures many times speak of Him as "coming in clouds," it is quite evident that the "like manner" may refer to this phase of His future manifestation.

Then again, He was to come as they had "seen" or "beheld" Him go. They beheld Him as He ascended. They watched Him until He disappeared, lost to their sight in the inclosing cloud. So

when He comes again, we may be sure it will be in visible manifestation. It will not be a secret, unseen coming. It will be an open advent that can be plainly seen. "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him" (Rev. i. 7). "They shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matt. xxiv. 30).

Perhaps no other language could have conveyed more clearly to those gazing disciples the thought that Christ was not to be gone forever, but would at some time return. Surely when an unbiased person reads these words the first thing that comes into his mind is that the ascended Messiah is to come again. It has been generally agreed (and how could it be otherwise?) that this utterance teaches unambiguously the personal second coming of Christ, that the same Jesus who actually left His disciples will at some time as actually return to them. Thus Barnes observes: "The same tried Friend who had been so faithful to them would return." "Though the Master

was taken," says the Rev. W. Clarkson, "He would come again; and when He returned it would, indeed, be 'in like manner,' but in more glorious form and with more splendid surroundings."

"Clothed in human nature," asserts Dr. A. Clarke, "with the same body, descending from heaven by His own sovereign and all-controlling power, thus shall He come again to judge the quick and the dead." From this Scripture we may gather with all positiveness that the brightly robed beings who delivered the message did not deem the second coming of Christ to be at all conjectural. With them it was sure. And so, too, should it be with us all.

Then again, this message undoubtedly was intended to be a comforting message, a message of consolation. It was to the sad hearts of the disciples a note of gladness, a wellspring of joy. How they had loved that blessed Jesus! In those years of intimate and yet mysterious association with Him, how they had learned to admire the tender-hearted

wonder-worker! At every counsel of wisdom, at every word of warning, at every message of affection, they marveled and loved the more. They had left all to follow Him. He had become to them more than all else. On Him their hopes were set. Around Him the tendrils of their manly love had closely twined. They had grieved at His death. It was the blighting of their cherished hopes, the blasting of their heart's anticipations. It brought a gloomy pall of darkness over their lives. It was an anguish of soul they never had experienced before. But oh! when He showed himself alive again, how their despair was turned to hope, and their sad hearts exceeding glad were made. Their dejection was turned to joy, and their mourning to singing. And that strange forty days during which He appeared and disappeared again and again! But now, oh, who can describe it? He was leaving them again; and this time He was departing from earth itself. Yes, He had already gone. They had seen Him arise

so majestically. They had watched Him disappear so completely. With longing hearts and straining eyes, they gaze eagerly into the space where last His well-loved form was discerned. Oh, if they could catch even one more glimpse! But no! He had gone, was departed entirely, and their hearts were sadly heavy. But, lo! as they yet continue to look earnestly and tearfully upward, they suddenly perceive that by their side are standing two beings brightly appareled.

The message they bear is a message of joy. The Lord was gone, but He would come again. He had vanished but at some time He would reappear. He had gone to heaven, but He would not remain there forever. He was separated from them, but it was not an eternal separation. He would yet return as actually as He had gone. They would see Him again coming in the clouds with might and majesty. Then would He receive them unto himself. Then would they again be in His precious personal

presence and enter upon the joy of their Lord. Truly the message was consolatory indeed. In view, then, of His return they would spend the allotted term of their earthly pilgrimage in active service in His cause, and at His coming receive the recompense of the reward. As one of them afterward wrote: "And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Peter v. 4). And another: "We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is" (I John iii. 2).

The other passage in Acts pointing directly to our Lord's advent is in chapter iii. 19-21: "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy

prophets which have been since the world began.”

The circumstances under which these words were uttered we have noticed in another place. It was when the lame man was healed at the temple's Beautiful Gate, and when Peter then discoursed to the assembled people. Dr. J. M. Macdonald writes: “He calls on them to repent, and proclaims the second glorious coming of Christ to judge the world.”

When Jesus was before on earth He was “sent” by His Father. Numerous Scriptures testify to this. (See John v. 23, 24, 30, 36; I John iv. 9, 10, 14). But after the completion of the former advent and Jesus had gone again to heaven, Peter says: “And that He may send the Christ.” The Authorized Version reads: “And He shall send,” etc. This necessarily alludes to another sending, one wholly distinct from the first. It is, then, a second sending by God. It must be, therefore, a second coming by Christ. So this apostolic utterance shows a real return of the real Messiah.

As we are certain of the first sending, so, too, we may be certain of the second sending. As the historical coming of Christ is true, so the prophetical coming is true also. The difference is that one is past, while the other is future; the one *has* been, while the other *is* to be. As we look *backward* to the one, so we may look *forward* to the other. As the one is certain, so the other is sure.

And, notice, it reads that He shall or may send "the Christ." An angel cannot fulfill this. Some great political or historical event is not enough. A marvelous dispensation of Providence will not be sufficient. Anything or anybody short of "the Christ" can never bring these words to an accomplishment. It must be the true Messiah, the personal Christ, the holy Anointed of God. He alone by His coming can fill to the full the scriptural prediction. Therefore for His personal advent we may well watch until at last the day breaks and the shadows flee away.

But are we mistaken here? Have we

alone come to this conclusion relative to the teaching of this text? By no means. It is quite uniformly considered by expositors of any note that the allusion is to the reappearing of Christ at the end of the age. "Nearly all critics," says Hackett, "understand this passage as referring to the return of Christ at the end of the world. The similarity of the language to that of other passages which announce that event demands this interpretation."* And this idea is carried out in the verse which follows where Jesus is spoken of as being received in heaven "until" a certain time, the "until" evidently expressing a limit to His stay there. "He has ascended into heaven," says Clarke, "and there He shall continue till He comes again to judge the quick and the dead." In the Acts the coming again of the great Judge is established beyond all need of doubt.

Ah! what a time that will be when again the Son is delegated to come to this earth! What an occasion when, es-

* See Hackett's entire comment on this verse.

corted by the heavenly hosts, down the glory-gilded pathway of the flashing skies, He shall in power come! How the saints will lift to Him holy hands in gladness and in joy! How the dim eyes will brighten; how the weary heart will leap for joy; what a pulsation of rapture divine will thrill the ready ones! Oh, to be ready then! God help us to "be ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."

CHAPTER X.

THE GENERAL RESURRECTION.

THE resurrection of the dead is a Bible doctrine. No one can dispute this. The very terms, "the resurrection" and "the resurrection of the dead," are found many times in the blessed Book which God has given to us. In that Book the doctrine is taught. On its sacred pages are to be found many declarations of the raising up of those who have fallen down in death. No matter what else we may believe or disbelieve, every one who has ever read the Scriptures with any degree of attention must admit that, whatever it may mean, allusions to the raising of the dead are multitudinous.

The resurrection is a doctrine which is taught plainly. The language used is often not especially hard to understand. We can readily see to what the inspired

writers are referring. Their words are not particularly ambiguous. Their method of dealing with this subject is not generally circuitous. And often they go at it so deliberately and directly that one cannot but see just what they mean. They use great plainness of speech in dealing with the resurrection question. It is a plain doctrine, plainly taught.

The resurrection is a doctrine of both covenants. It is revealed in both the Old Testament and in the New. Not alone in the later and plainer revelations of the New Testament do we find it; but among the poets, the prophets, and the patriarchs of earlier times this belief is to be found. In their belief of this doctrine and in their proclamation of it, the apostles of Christ join hands with the prophets of God across the chasm of time that intervenes.

This doctrine of a general resurrection at the last day must, of course, be known to all careful readers of the Bible. That at the second coming of Christ, all men of all ages are to be raised from the dead

is a scriptural teaching so obvious that it hardly calls for repetition here. That "the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done ill unto the resurrection of judgment" (John v. 28, 29), this is something with which all Bible students are familiar. That "as is Adam all die, so also in the Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. xv. 22) is a statement of the sacred writings with which none of us are unacquainted. That "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. xii. 2), is an angelic revelation which we all have read many times. And the lofty strain of the evangelical prophet is not new to us: "Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead" (Is. xxvi, 19). So we are positive

that, when Christ our Lord shall return, there is most surely to be a resurrection of all the dead, a calling from their lifeless and disintegrated condition of all those who shall be found asleep in the dust of the earth.

Then, in addition to this, we all must know that the general resurrection is to be a literal resurrection. It is to the actual raising up of those who have actually died. It will be the real reliving of men who were really dead. In other words, it is to be a bodily revival. That this is the biblical teaching is indisputable. We understand it to be a corporeal resuscitation because all the Bible examples or precedents are of this kind. (See John xi. 43, 44; Matt. xxvii. 52, 53, etc.). We believe it is such because the first fruits, our Saviour himself, came forth from the tomb bodily and tangibly (I Cor xv. 20; John xx. 24-28). We take it to be a physical raising because they are to be raised from the "graves" (John v. 28, 29; Hos. xiii. 14; Ezek. xxxvii. 12); from the "dust of the

earth" (Dan. xii. 2; Is. xxvi. 19); from the "sea" (Rev. xx. 13). Such an arising, from such places and from such conditions, can be nothing short of a literal raising up alive of the corporeity of those who died. Says Henry on II Tim. ii. 18: "The resurrection of the dead is one of the great doctrines of Christ. Now see the subtlety of the serpent and the serpent's seed. They did not deny the resurrection, but put a corrupt interpretation on that true doctrine, saying, the resurrection is past already; that what Christ spake concerning the resurrection, is to be understood mystically and by way of allegory, that it must be meant of a spiritual resurrection only. It is true, there is a spiritual resurrection, but from thence to infer that there will not be a true and real resurrection of the body at the last day, is to dash one truth of Christ in pieces against another."

The resurrection is a doctrine of hope. It constituted, in part at least, "the hope of Israel." It is an event to be expected,

and one ardently to be desired. When Rachel, weeping for her beloved children, refused to be comforted for them because they were not, what a ray of hope must have come to her at the glad assurance that, from the land of the enemy, they would come again to their own border. When hearts have been saddened and cheeks with bitter tears have been bedewed, with what a comforting degree of hopefulness could the soothed affections look up in gratitude to God when there came the blessed and consoling thought of the resurrection of the dead.

The resurrection is a doctrine of joy. "Weeping may come in to lodge at even, but joy cometh in the morning." The glad time is approaching when "shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." The resurrection is something which to us has ever been a source of satisfaction; as it has, we trow, to all true believers. It is a doctrine that gives peculiar pleasure, a teaching that produces emotions of joy. Its contemplation is a full foun-

tain of genuine gratification. Meditations upon it are happy and sweet. It is a joyous and inspiring hope, one that beams with brightest rays upon the onward pathway of the toiling pilgrim. It surely sheds a living luster on our way, and fills the happy heart with a high and holy expectancy.

To a great extent this doctrine was repudiated by the ancient philosophical heathen. Dr. David Brown speaks of it as being repulsive to the genuine Greek. Dr. C. F. Kling says: "Among the philosophically educated of all ages we discover a disinclination for this doctrine." Notwithstanding their darkness and despair concerning a future life, they still were repulsed by this divine doctrine. As to their hopelessness the Rev. Marcus Dods, D.D., writes: "Here and there an individual among the heathen speaks of death as the 'interruption, not the extinction of life,' or is driven by the death of a noble friend to hope for a life beyond; but at the best that future life is shadowy, colorless, cold and unattract-

ive. The fact is that, without the knowledge of the resurrection of the body, the hope of immortality and the notions of a future life must be dim, perplexed and vacillating."

In the true revealed religion, however, this doctrine is found, and by Christians it is believed. In the words of the Rev. H. D. Ward: "The doctrine of the resurrection of the body distinguishes Christianity from all other religions." And Prof. P. C. Barker: "The resurrection of the dead . . . is, beyond doubt, the specific revelation of Christianity."

In this consideration of the question of the resurrection, we purpose to discuss it (not as we find it taught throughout the various books of the Bible), but as we find it brought before us in the book of Acts. In our previous investigations of this doctrine as found in the Acts, it will be remembered that we confined ourself to the resurrection of Christ. But it is now our intention to consider the resurrection as it relates to others—the general resurrection of the race of man.

In pursuance of this object, then, let us again notice the doctrine and the hope of the resurrection of the dead as founded upon the indubitable historical fact of the resurrection of our adorable Lord. If His resurrection can successfully be gainsaid, we may bid an eternal adieu to the thought of any future resurrection of mankind. But that event being so unshakably established—in the Gospels, in the Epistles, in the Apocalypse, and, as we have seen, in the Acts—we have no doubts at all of the occurrence of the great and all-important future event. But let us see from other Scriptures how our resurrection depends upon His; how the two stand or fall together. In the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Vol. XVIII, p. 426, we read: “The resurrection of Christ is not merely the type of moral resurrection from sin to holiness, but at once the type and the cause and the pledge of the actual resurrection of the body. ‘If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God

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To a great extent this doctrine was repudiated by the ancient philosophical heathen. Dr. David Brown speaks of it as being repulsive to the genuine Greek. Dr. C. F. Kling says: "Among the philosophically educated of all ages we discover a disinclination for this doctrine." Notwithstanding their darkness and despair concerning a future life, they still were repulsed by this divine doctrine. As to their hopelessness the Rev. Marcus Dods, D.D., writes: "Here and there an individual among the heathen speaks of death as the 'interruption, not the extinction of life,' or is driven by the death of a noble friend to hope for a life beyond; but at the best that future life is shadowy, colorless, cold and unattract-

ive. The fact is that, without the knowledge of the resurrection of the body, the hope of immortality and the notions of a future life must be dim, perplexed and vacillating."

In the true revealed religion, however, this doctrine is found, and by Christians it is believed. In the words of the Rev. H. D. Ward: "The doctrine of the resurrection of the body distinguishes Christianity from all other religions." And Prof. P. C. Barker: "The resurrection of the dead . . . is, beyond doubt, the specific revelation of Christianity."

In this consideration of the question of the resurrection, we purpose to discuss it (not as we find it taught throughout the various books of the Bible), but as we find it brought before us in the book of Acts. In our previous investigations of this doctrine as found in the Acts, it will be remembered that we confined ourself to the resurrection of Christ. But it is now our intention to consider the resurrection as it relates to others—the general resurrection of the race of man.

In pursuance of this object, then, let us again notice the doctrine and the hope of the resurrection of the dead as founded upon the indubitable historical fact of the resurrection of our adorable Lord. If His resurrection can successfully be gainsaid, we may bid an eternal adieu to the thought of any future resurrection of mankind. But that event being so unshakably established—in the Gospels, in the Epistles, in the Apocalypse, and, as we have seen, in the Acts—we have no doubts at all of the occurrence of the great and all-important future event. But let us see from other Scriptures how our resurrection depends upon His; how the two stand or fall together. In the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Vol. XVIII, p. 426, we read: “The resurrection of Christ is not merely the type of moral resurrection from sin to holiness, but at once the type and the cause and the pledge of the actual resurrection of the body. ‘If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God

bring with Him' (I Thes. iv. 14); 'He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus' (II Cor. iv. 14); 'if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him' (Rom. vi. 8)."

Particularly to Paul's unanswerable argument, as found in I Cor. xv. 12-22, we call attention on this point. The apostle first shows how undeniably true is the resurrection of Christ and then continues:

"Now if Christ is preached that He hath been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we witnessed of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been

raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable. But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first fruits of them that are asleep. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.”*

Seeing thus plainly that mankind’s resurrection depends upon Christ’s resurrection, and having already seen how clearly that great event is taught in the book of Acts, we come now to consider how in this same book is brought to our

*Says Rev. E. H. Bickersteth: “St. Paul declares that the doctrine of Christ’s resurrection and that of ours stand or fall together. The objectors urge, ‘There can be, there will be, no resurrection of the dead.’ But the apostle replies, ‘There *has been* a resurrection. It is a proven fact. Christ is risen; we know it, we testify of it, and hundreds of witnesses bear us out.’ Here is an indisputable fact, and one fact outweighs a thousand theories. One dead body has actually been raised; and if one, why shall not all be raised likewise?”

attention the doctrine of the general arising of the dead.

To a statement in the fourth chapter of Acts we first call attention. We there read: "And as they (Peter and John) spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being sore troubled because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus *the resurrection from the dead*" (verses. 1, 2). From this we are led to see that not only were the apostles teaching that Jesus, who had been crucified but a short time before this, was now alive; but they were teaching also that "in" or "through" Him was to take place "the resurrection from the dead." A plain reference, to be sure, to the doctrine of a literal revival at the last great day. As we know such a resurrection to be taught elsewhere in the Bible, so here we have it clearly brought before us in the book whose doctrines we are considering.

We next notice that in Athens the Epicureans and Stoics took Paul "to be a

setter forth of strange demons; because he preached Jesus and *the resurrection*" (xvii. 18). Probably to many of these philosophizing pagans the resurrection was "a new thing," and was an exceedingly unbelievable doctrine to them. Dr. Daniel Whitby has said: "As for the immortality the body shall obtain at the resurrection, the heathens knew and believed nothing of it; they laughed at it, and looked upon it as a thing impossible, and unworthy of God to do, and without any example to convince them that it might be done" (Comment on II Tim. i. 10).

But, notwithstanding this, when Paul was in Athens, he did not in this respect shun to declare all the counsel of God. He held before them the historic verity of the raising up of Christ (thus giving them an "example to convince them it might be done"), and also informed them of "the resurrection." And when he stands in the midst of Mars' hill and speaks to them of the final judgment of all the world, he predicates the assurance

of that event upon the resurrection of the dead. He tells them that God "hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (xvii. 31). Now then, how would the resurrection of Christ be an assurance that the world is to be judged? In this way: many generations of men had died; many more would die before the "appointed" day would come. As the Judge on that day of world-wide judgment would not go through the farcical performance of judging dead men, there must be some way in which those who had died previous to the judgment could be summoned there as living men and women. This could take place by their being raised from the dead. These philosophic heathens did not believe in a resurrection of the dead, but assurance that such an event would occur was given to them (and to all) in that God had already raised up His Son Jesus. If He

could raise *one*, He could raise *all*. If He *had* raised one, He *might* raise all. That One He had raised; and, as the *whole world*, living and dead, is to be judged, consequently that part of the world that is dead must be raised. Thus did Paul teach to them the resurrection of all the dead. How they received this teaching we are distinctly informed. Some received it with contempt, some with indifference, and a few with believing hearts. We read: "Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead plural, *νεκρῶν*, some mocked; but others said, We will hear thee concerning this yet again. Thus Paul went out from among them. But certain men clave unto him, and believed: among whom was also Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris and others with them" (xxxii. (32-34).

After the same manner do we find it to-day; and also, perhaps, after about the same proportion. The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is not always received as it should be. Al-

though revealed to us so plainly that a sensible child can see it to be a Bible teaching, yet some of the philosophizing wiseacres regard it with contempt, many treat it with a cold indifference, while comparatively few receive it in all its deep significance and blessed fullness and exact literalness. May we, like the brave Dionysius and the believing Damaris, receive this grand Bible truth in the full assurance of faith.

When Paul, that untiring herald of the gospel of the Son of God, had been violently seized as a prisoner in the city of Jerusalem, and by the chief captain was taken to appear before the Jewish council, the Sanhedrin, he there made a rather startling and effective allusion to his belief in the resurrection. The historian says: "But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees: touching the hope and *resurrection of the dead* I am called in question. And when he had so said,

there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees: and the assembly was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. And there arose a great clamor: and some of the scribes of the Pharisees' part stood up, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: and what if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel?" (xxiii. 6-9).

Paul believed in the resurrection. He held it as the grand hope of the future reliving of the dead (I Cor. xv. 16-18). Believing as he did, he sought to make a point in his favor among the Pharisees by the public avowal of his faith in the presence of the councilors.

Later he is brought before Felix. Accusation against him is made by the hired orator Tertullus. In this accusation three things are charged against him. The second charge is that of his being "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes;" in other words, that he was a prominent Christian minister, an emi-

nent and successful gospel preacher. Paul replies to the charges in their order. The second charge, however, he does not attempt to deny. He *was* a Christian, or what they might contemptuously designate as a Nazarene. Of that he was not ashamed. He rejoiced in it, and was glad of an opportunity of confessing it. And, in his confession of it, he shows the resurrection to be such a fundamental part of Christianity as to be inseparable from it. So he says: "But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets: having hope toward God, which these also themselves look for, that *there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust*" (xxiv. 14, 15). Later in this speech he alludes, also, to his examination before the Jewish council, and shows that there they found no evil doing in him, "Except," said he, "it be for this one voice, that I cried standing

among them, Touching *the resurrection of the dead* I am called in question (Syr., on trial) before you this day" (xxiv. 21). Olshausen remarks that "as here again the Sadducees might be his chief accusers he brought afresh into view the resurrection of the dead as a principal charge brought against him by his enemies."

Then again, when Paul makes his defense before Agrippa, he mentions the resurrection and the hope of that event. His own words are: "And now I stand here to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. And concerning this hope I am accused by the Jews, oh, king! Why is it judged incredible with you, if *God doth raise the dead?*" (xxvi. 6-8). Thus, as Dr. William Smith says: "He reminds the king of the great hope which continually sustained the worship of the Jewish nation—the hope of a deliverer, promised by God himself, who should be

a conqueror of death. He had been led to see that this promise had been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth; he proclaimed His resurrection to be the pledge of a new and immortal life (*His. of Bib.*, p. 826). And when, later on at Rome, Paul said to the Jews, "For because of the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain" (xxviii. 20); it is more than likely that he was alluding to this same resurrection hope. For the hope of the raising of the dead was pre-eminently the hope of Israel.

This apprehension of Paul and the whole procedure of the trials that followed it, seem chiefly to be because of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. Otherwise we see not why it should be made so prominent a part in the answers of the apostle. F. W. Farrar writes: "St. Paul, even after he had written the epistles to the Romans and Galatians, did not hesitate to exclaim before the assembled Sanhedrin, 'Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees,' and to reduce the whole question between

him and them to a question of believing in the resurrection.”*

Our idea of this may be expressed as follows: Paul predicted the *future* resurrection of all the dead upon the *past* resurrection of Christ. We have plainly perceived this from his first letter to the church at Corinth. In advocating the resurrection, a doctrine which appears to have been particularly dear to him, it is evident that he made much of the resurrection of the Lord. Thus we have seen that Felix, when declaring Paul's cause unto Agrippa, speaks of the Jews

* “The principal fact, which he attested as the apostle of Christ, was His resurrection from the dead to be the first fruits of His people; and all the doctrines of the gospel were intimately connected with that fundamental principle. The first persecution of the church was excited by the testimony of the apostles to the resurrection of their crucified Lord; and the Sadducees took the lead in it, because ‘they preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead.’ The enmity also of many in the council against Paul, at this time, was increased by their consciousness that his doctrine was wholly subversive of their favorite sentiment; so that in every way he was called to account for preaching Jesus as risen, and the hope and doctrine of a future resurrection.”—*(Scott.)*

as having "certain questions against him of their own religion, and of one Jesus, who was dead, *whom Paul affirmed to be alive*" (xxv. 19.)* As the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection at all, the whole doctrine was distasteful to them. The Pharisees, however, believed in a resurrection; but, with the Sadducees, they generally repudiated Christ as the Messiah. Now, if they admitted that Christ had been raised from the dead, as He had said of himself that He should be, they would virtually be admitting His claims to the Messiahship. And this they were persistently determined not to do. As a nation they had been the "betrayers and murderers" of the Just One. From then until now they have generally persisted in their rejection of Him. We thus see that the preaching by Paul of the bare future resurrection was contrary to the opinions of the Sadducean sect, while the advocating of

*Dr. Smith speaks of this as "an incidental proof of what we have seen before, that the controversy between Paul and his accusers turned upon the resurrection."—(*His. of Bib.*, p. 824.)

the accomplished resurrection of Christ was terribly cutting to both sects. But Paul would preach the resurrection, and he would preach it as being firmly established by the fact that Christ had already been raised. With him, to blot out the literal resurrection of the crucified Nazarene was to blot out the resurrection at the last day: and to blot out the last day resurrection was to blot out the resurrection of Jesus. In his inspired mind, they were established together or they collapsed together. Hence his course and his preaching, and hence their hatred toward him and apprehension of him.

Whitby, commenting on Acts xxiii. 6, makes these judicious remarks: "It is inquired why Paul here saith he was called in question for this hope in general, and xxiv. 15; xxvi. 6, repeats the same thing, when he was only called in question concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Now the reason of this will appear from this observation; that before our Saviour's passion the doctrine

which He preached being chiefly leveled against the vain traditions of the scribes and Pharisees, and His woes denounced against them, they still appear in opposition to Him, the Sadducees being scarce ever mentioned as His adversaries; but after His resurrection the testimony of the apostles being this, that Christ was risen from the dead, and so directly contrary to that which distinguished the Sadducees from the Pharisees, we find them most forward to oppose their testimony. . . . Another reason why Paul thus mixed these things together might be this, that the apostles testified the resurrection of the dead 'through Jesus,' and taught that God would 'raise us up by Jesus,' and so the proof of the one, viz., that Christ was risen, was a confirmation of the general resurrection."

We have before spoken of the resurrection of all the race. But as in the book of Acts there is a saying which ought to manifest beyond all controversy that all men irrespective of character are to be

subjects of the resurrection, we desire to call attention again to that passage. And this we do the more readily because it is one of the *plain* statements of the Bible. In the Scriptures there are undoubtedly "some things hard to be understood." But this passage is not one of that kind. Its sense is plain, its import is obvious, its teaching is easy of comprehension. As unambiguously as a direct declaration can be made, it declares that both good and bad are to be raised. As strongly as an emphatic statement can present the idea, it states that the righteous and the unrighteous alike are to be participators in the resurrection. The statement is to be found in that bold and reverent confession of faith made by Paul to Felix the governor. His familiar words are: "But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets: having hope toward God, which these also

themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust" (xxiv. 14, 15).

If there are any who, directly contradicting the apostle, will say that the wicked are not to be raised, let the inspired preacher show them their inexcusable blunder. Let his calm but positive assertion put their blind error to shame. Let his words show to any such how utterly erroneous are all such unbiblical notions. No, Paul asserts, with apostolical assurance, "that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust." This statement agrees with the general trend of Scripture on this subject, and it is to be surely believed.

There are in the Acts two occurrences which tend greatly to establish the realness and sureness of the final raising of the dead. They establish a precedent that should bear with it great weight. In this book which we have been studying and which we have seen to teach so fully a real future resurrection, there are found the authentic records of the raising

to life of two persons who had been dead. Of these persons, the one was a man, the other a woman. If any one has felt at all inclined to doubt the literalness of a bodily resurrection, let him carefully ponder these two accounts until his disbelieving doubts have disappeared. These records are those of the restoring to bodily life individuals who had really died. The accounts are plain; the language is comprehensible. No opportunity is found for spiritualization. Everything is actual and physical. If this historical raising of the dead is distinctly literal, we may well be assured that the prophetic raising of the dead, spoken of in the same treatise by the same author, is literal also. This surely is the sensible conclusion. But we turn to the accounts as recorded. The first is that of Tabitha. Let us read it thoughtfully, and perhaps we shall be able to say with Dr. D. Brown: "The graphic minuteness of detail here imparts to the narrative an air of charming reality."

“Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days, that she fell sick, and died: and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber. And as Lydda was nigh unto Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men unto him, intreating him, Delay not to come unto us. And Peter arose and went with them. And when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa: and many believed on the Lord” (ix. 36-42).

How real is this whole transaction; how utterly devoid of sentimentalism and spiritualism. Who, in this unvarnished account of what actually occurred, can see anything but the real reliving of a dead person? Easily is it to be seen that this can be nothing but a bodily resurrection. Substantiality and corporeality are painted in colors unmistakable upon the whole picture. And we see no reason to disbelieve that the final resurrection shall be fully as substantial and corporeal.

It may be objected that at the resurrection of the last day multitudes of persons will have become totally disintegrated, while in the case under consideration the body was yet intact. Now, it may be thought to be much less difficult for a person to be raised who has recently died and who has not seen corruption, than would be the resurrection of one who was entirely decomposed and whose dust had been scattered to the four winds of heaven. Let us here say that our expectation of a resurrection

does not rest upon philosophical probabilities, but on the sure Word of God. If we were depending upon that which is philosophically certain or scientifically sure, we would be plunged into the depth and darkness of desperate despair. But it is upon the Scriptures and the power of God that we place our dependence. We know the power of God to be greater than the weakness of men. We are assured that the possibilities of Divinity are supremely superior to the probabilities of humanity. And we say with Paul: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" An infidel told us at one time that if it were possible for a person to be raised to life who had been dead for ten minutes, it would be possible to raise one no matter how long dead or how widely scattered as to his constituent parts. And all must agree that the power which could perform the one task would be equal to the other also. But we come to the other case referred to, that of Eutychus at Troas. We read:

“And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where we were gathered together. And there sat in the window a certain young man named Eutychus, borne down with deep sleep; and as Paul discoursed yet longer, being borne down by his sleep he fell down from the third story, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Make ye no ado; for his life is in him. And when he was gone up, and had broken the bread, and eaten, and had talked with them a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. And they brought the lad alive, and were not a little comforted” (xx. 7-12).

Now some, because of Paul's words, “For his life is in him,” have thought that Eutychus was not really killed by his fall; but we rather hold as it is ex-

pressed by Dr. Whedon: "Luke means to affirm complete death. . . . It was not until after Paul's miraculous embrace that it became true that 'his life' was 'in him.'" (See Scott, Bloomfield, Lechler, Alexander, etc.) These resuscitations which have already taken place show us the complete possibility of the resurrection which is to come.

We have now seen that the book of Acts teaches the bodily resurrection of Jesus, and also the general resurrection at the last day. According to this book the dead are to be revived, the sleeping are to be awakened. What an hour that will be when "all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John v. 28, 29).

It is not to be supposed that the resurrection body of the saints will be gross and perishable. This present is the "natural" or "animal" body. That will be the incorruptible and spiritual body.

This is mortal; that, immortal. This is earthly; that, heavenly. This is lowly; that, glorious. The body of our humiliation is to be conformed to the body of His glory. Then shall we shine resplendently forth in the kingdom of our Father. Then we shall be like the angels, to die no more. Well may we thank God for divine revelation concerning resurrection.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FINAL JUDGMENT.

THE church has ever held to the doctrine of the judgment. That clause in the Apostles' Creed which says: "From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead," has probably been disbelieved by but very few real Christians. The faith of the Old Testament saints, the faith of the New Testament saints, and the faith of the saints ever since apostolic times, has ever leaned hard upon the thought of a day of final judgment, a season of reckoning, a time of giving account to God. That "we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God" (Rom. xiv. 10). has ever been believed by the true worshipers of the Infinite One.

That a time of judging, a season of

world adjudication, shall ultimately occur is clearly and often declared in Holy Writ. The psalmist says: "And He shall judge the world in righteousness, He shall minister judgment to the peoples in uprightness" (Ps. ix. 8). Says the wise man: "I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked" (Eccl. iii. 17). Isaiah tells of the time when "the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity" (Is. xxvi. 21). The Saviour uttered these solemn words: "And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matt. xii. 36). Said Paul: "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. v. 10). James speaks of those "that are to be judged by a law of liberty" (Jas. ii. 12). Peter said: "But the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word

have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men" (II Peter iii. 7). John speaks of those who "may have boldness in the day of judgment" (I John iv. 17). And Jude makes mention of "the judgment of the great day."

In Heb. vi. 2 the judgment is spoken of as "eternal judgment." This does not mean, of course, that the act or process of judging will be going on eternally. The idea evidently is that the issues of that judgment are final and such as cannot be revoked. As Stuart says: "A judgment the consequences of which are eternal."*

The Scriptures are not silent as to the time when this "eternal judgment" shall occur. It is in connection with the coming of Christ, His second advent at the last

* "He does not use the word *κρίσεως* (which would have represented the *act* of judging), but *κρίματος*, *sentence* or *doom* pronounced, and he combines it with the same word as is used by our Future Judge (Math. 25; 41, 46). He declares that the *κρίμα* or *doom* pronounced, whether life or death, is *αἰώνιον* everlasting" (*Wordsworth*).

day. As Jesus said: "The word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day," (John xii. 48). And again: "Now after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them" (Matt. xxv. 19). Said the psalmist: "For He cometh to judge the earth" (Ps. xcvi. 9).

Having in this general way remarked these things concerning the judgment, we pass on to consider those passages in Acts which refer to that significant event. Let us, therefore, take cognizance of Peter's words at the house of Cornelius. After speaking of some things pertaining to the Saviour's life, death and resurrection, he continued: "And He charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is He which is ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead" (x. 42).

We are here told who the Judge is to be. Jesus is the One who by His Father is ordained for that position and work. How exactly this agrees with our Saviour's own words: "For neither doth the

Father judge any man, but He hath given all judgment unto the Son. . . . And He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man" (John v. 22, 27).

And then, too, in Peter's utterance we notice who are the subjects of judgment. Both the "quick and the dead" are to be judged. Those who are living when Christ appears and those who have previously died are alike to be judged. This is stated so plainly as to admit of no doubt whatever. Van Oosterzee on a similar expression in II Tim. iv. 1 comments: "The *quick* are they who shall be alive at the Parousia. . . . The *dead*, on the other hand, are they who have fallen asleep before the return of the Lord and then shall be awakened."

True it is that, for the dead to be judged, they must be awakened. This, we know, the Scriptures clearly reveal. In fact, we have already seen how plainly and prominently that teaching is contained in the Acts.

The next passage in Acts to be ex-

amined is chapter xvii. 30, 31: "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead."

This shows again that Jesus is the One ordained to be Judge. It shows also that "the world" ("the inhabited earth," margin, R. V.) will be judged. It gives, too, the additional information that the day for judging the world has been "appointed." It is a special period, a particular date, a set time. We may therefore be fully convinced that, when God's especially appointed epoch shall at last arrive, the judgment will take place. Nothing can hasten the appointed day. Nothing can put further away the established time. And may we be wise enough not to put off the preparing for that occasion.

This Scripture teaches us also of the justice of that judgment. Everything will be conducted in perfect equity. None will have any reason for finding fault. For the world will be judged "in righteousness." What we know of God's character fully corresponds with this. "A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He" (Deut. xxxii. 4).

In this world much injustice is practiced. Even the so-called courts of justice are not always so just as their name would imply. And here, too, we see things very unequally distributed. Sometimes the vilest are exalted and the wickedest are prosperous; while perhaps those who are upright and holy are ground down beneath the oppressor's iron heel. As one has said: "There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be righteous men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous" (Eccl. viii. 14).

But in the judgment there will be meted out perfect justice by the all-knowing and all-just Judge. The Lord will render, or "pay back," to every man according to his works. Judgment shall be "in righteousness."

We next adduce chapter xxiv. 24, 25: "But after certain days, Felix came with Drusilla, his wife, which was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus. And as he reasoned of righteousness, and temperance, and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified," etc.

Here we see that the Christian herald reasoned with the wicked governor not of "righteousness and temperance" alone, but also of "the judgment to come." Notice, it wasn't a judgment then taking place, a judgment synchronous with the gospel dispensation; but it was "the judgment to come," or, as the Syriac gives it, "the future judgment." This coming judgment, this future judgment, is to be at the "appointed" day which we have previously noticed.

Ah, "the judgment to come!" What a thought to proclaim to wicked men! What a terrible thing for them to meditate upon! As they think of it as certain "to come," how it should impress their heart, how strongly it should urge them to quit their wickedness and seek mercy while the opportunity is theirs!

In this connection it may be well to cite a portion of that quotation from the prophet Joel which we find in the second chapter of Acts. Peter used the words in that wonderfully effective Pentecostal address. We read: "And I will show wonders in the heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath; blood and fire and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord come, that great and notable day" (verses 19, 20).

"The day of the Lord, that great and notable day," referred to a day which was then future. And it is yet future. But it is sure to "come." The "day of the Lord" is indisputably the day when the Lord shall come and judge the world.

That it refers to the day of the Lord's advent and of the final judgment, and not to the events of Jerusalem's overthrow, we deem to be certain. "This is to have its full accomplishment, Dr. Pococke thinks, in the day of judgment" (*Henry*). Wesley speaks of it as "Eminently the last day." J. J. Butler says: "This in the highest sense can refer only to the final judgment." Barnes, Lechler, Gerok, Wordsworth, etc., seem to refer it the same way.

After the consideration of these passages we may see from the book of Acts that the judgment is a future judgment, of both living and dead, presided over by Christ, conducted in righteousness, and to take place upon an appointed day. That appointed day is the "day of the Lord," ushered in, as we know, by the coming of Christ.

What a time that will be! But, notwithstanding that shall be an awful day, when the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together, yet even then some will have boldness.

The terrors of that trying time will not affright them. While some may well call for the rocks and mountains to fall upon them and hide them from the Judge, others will have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. A sufficiency of grace will, at the revelation of Jesus Christ, be brought unto every true Christian. It is our blessed privilege to serve God here, and at last to be presented "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."

CHAPTER XII.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

WE have now come to the closing chapter of our little work. We herein treat of the kingdom of God. As to our views on this subject, it is not impossible that some of our readers should disagree with us. Nevertheless we will not quarrel, but we can examine this subject for a little time together. If we wrongly expound the Scripture we want not any one to agree with us. But if what we set forth is biblical, if it does not disagree with the correct use of language and with the sound principles of candid exegesis, we shall expect an acquiescence on the part of him who peruses it. We certainly desire to set forth that only which is true, and have confidence that we shall be successful in the attempt.

In those mysterious days intervening between our Lord's resurrection and His ascension, He held converse with His followers. Those were pregnant days, big with interest and importance. During them the Saviour evidently discoursed of those things which lay the nearest to His heart and which were of the weightiest import to His disciples and to the world. The "kingdom of God" was one of the subjects of His discourse. In the third verse of the Acts we read that He "showed himself alive after His passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God."

Olshausen here says that Luke "brings into view what was the great subject of our Lord's conversations with His disciples, viz., the whole compass of the interests of the kingdom of God. For we must distinguish between λέγων περὶ τῆς βασιλείας and, λέγων τὰ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας, the latter of which phrases expresses the thought just indicated. The circumstances also lead

to the conclusion that Christ would confide to His disciples, during these last moments of His personal presence, all that He had yet to say respecting the kingdom. It is plain, finally, from verse 6, that the word βασιλειᾶ cannot here denote the Christian religion, as Kuinoel supposes.

At this period the ideas of the disciples concerning the kingdom were probably generally correct; so far, at least, as they had been able to apprehend their Master's teachings. But they had not yet grasped everything. Their divinely instructed ideas were not perfectly developed. Their knowledge had not come to maturity. They undoubtedly had the outlines correct, but those outlines needed to be filled in to rounded and symmetrical completeness. Probably not until Pentecost did they have fully developed and wholly adequate conceptions of the heavenly kingdom. But doubtless the Saviour's previous teaching and the instruction during the forty days, when brought to their remembrance and rightly interpreted to them

by the Holy Spirit (John xiv. 26; xvi. 13-15), set them fully right on this line.

That, before the Spirit's illuminating work, they had not arrived at full knowledge of the exalted character of the future kingdom, may perhaps be manifest in their asking Jesus: "Lord, dost thou at this time (the time of the baptism with the Holy Spirit) restore the kingdom to Israel?" (i. 6). In answer to their inquiry He informs them that the *times* and *seasons*, which the Father has set within His own authority, it was not for them to know. It is to be observed that He found no fault with the views already entertained, but simply refused to give light as to the special period of the kingdom's manifestation. As Lechler says: "Those interpreters have altogether mistaken the sense, who maintain that Jesus here entirely rejects the conceptions entertained by His apostles respecting the Messianic kingdom; for this is by no means the case."

Some, indeed, since the days of the apostles, have conceived that the king-

dom was "restored" or set up at the time of the promised baptism with the Holy Spirit. We, however, know of no Scripture which makes such a statement. And we are positive that the apostles themselves never once said so. The Pentecostal baptism is one thing; the establishment of the kingdom of God we consider as being quite another thing. In fact, we consider the kingdom of God, the perfected, glorious and eternal kingdom, as being external and future. Under the figure of synecdoche, a part being taken for the whole, it may be spoken of as being present. In this way the king, or the subjects, or the territory, or the principles of the kingdom might be spoken of as the kingdom. But in its fullness and glory, we deem that it is not due until the advent of our Lord, and that when once fully established it shall endure forever.

"The writers of the Old Testament," says Smith's Bible Dictionary, "speak of it distinctly as future and not present; and many passages of the New Testa-

ment refer to it in connection with the second coming of Christ. It is therefore maintained by some interpreters, that this kingdom has not yet been established, and will not be until the Lord returns in glory."

The Rev. S. J. Andrews, in speaking of the Lord's own teachings concerning the Messianic kingdom, writes: "This kingdom was future, and not to be set up till the Lord should return from heaven. . . . He must depart and go to the Father and be invested with authority, and at His return He would establish His kingdom. . . . He identifies His kingdom with 'the world to come.' . . . Nor does He anywhere give any intimation that His kingdom was to be limited in duration" (*The Revelations of God to Men*, pp. 251, 255).

In reply to the assertion that the kingdom of God "is here now in embryo," the Rev. H. D. Ward said: "Let it be so; it is not of an embryo I speak, but of an organized kingdom. It belongs not to an embryo to govern the world, to

wield the scepter of a great kingdom and rule the chosen people. Let the embryo be here. Before it can become the kingdom it must go down into the ground, and spring up into a new life with Jesus in the resurrection. . . . I admit an embryo state of the kingdom as the life is in the seed, and the germ is in the bud before the springtime quickens them with new life and clothes them with beauty and splendor. . . . But any one in the embryo state that assumes the crown and scepter for and in behalf of the son of David in the government of the church, the state and the world, is the Anti-christ. . . .

“Let me ask, however, for the Scripture proof that the kingdom of God . . . has yet come in this world? I ask when did it begin? and what is its history in the records of time? Satisfactory answers to these plain questions cannot be given. On the contrary, it can be shown that the age of the apostles and the ages succeeding never acknowledged the kingdom come, but were constantly looking

in the future for the promised kingdom; and furthermore the origin and the history of the delusion can be shown—names and places and dates and circumstances.”

The kingdom of God was a subject of primitive preaching. The early preachers had something to say concerning a “kingdom.” Jesus had predicted: “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole inhabited earth” (Matt. xxiv. 14). The first heralds of Christianity did their part in fulfilling this prophetic utterance. The “gospel of the kingdom” cannot be proclaimed without saying somewhat about the “kingdom;” but we have abundant witness in the Acts that tidings concerning a kingdom, the kingdom of God, were duly announced to the people.

When Philip held that great revival in Samaria, he preached not only Jesus as a crucified, risen and exalted Saviour, but he instructed them respecting the kingdom of God. He preached to them what some would stigmatize as “doc-

trine;" but doctrinal discourses are just what people ought to have. And in those strangely stirring times the hearers listened to the doctrine of the kingdom. In Acts viii. 12 we read: "But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

Concerning the labors of Paul at Ephesus the historian has the following record: "And he entered into the synagogue and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God " (xix. 8). The apostle presented arguments on this subject. He "reasoned" with the people. "Concerning the kingdom of God" he persuaded them.

Later on, when he addresses the elders of Ephesus, he shows how prominent a place the kingdom of God had occupied in his teachings. In chapter xx. 25 are recorded these words: "And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see

my face no more." It is manifestly seen that a fitting proportion of his preaching had been the "preaching of the kingdom."

When as a prisoner Paul went to Rome, he carried with him the good news of the kingdom. In the capital city of the world, that "great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (Rev. xvii. 18), he told of a better, brighter, and more enduring kingdom, ruled over by One the scepter of whose kingdom is the scepter of uprightness (Heb. i. 8). So when the Jews had appointed Paul a day and had come in great number to his lodging, "he expounded, *testifying the kingdom of God*, and persuading them concerning Jesus," etc. (xxviii. 23).

And this is not the only occasion when, in the proud city by the Tiber, Paul taught the people concerning the eternal kingdom. How many hundreds there were who listened to his instructions on this theme we have no means of ascertaining. But we do know that "he abode two whole years in his own hired

dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, *preaching the kingdom of God*, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness" (xxviii. 30, 31). Under the range of his influence many, in this way, must have been brought. And they heard the glad tidings of the kingdom.

Having marked that the kingdom's proclamation is recorded in the Acts, we will next observe some things concerning our Lord's kingship. The royalty of the Messiah is declared not alone in the prophetic Scriptures, the gospels, etc., but it is brought to notice in the Acts also. We may first quote chapter v. 31: "Him did God exalt with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour." Here the exalted Christ is called a Prince (*αρχηγός*). Dr. D. Brown speaks of this word as "expressing that *royalty* which all Israel looked for in Messiah." While Lechler says: "The office of Christ as our King is here indicated."

In chapter xvii. 6, 7 is found a significant utterance. Their enemies at Thes-

salonica say of the Christians: "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; whom Jason hath received: and these all act contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that *there is another king, one Jesus.*" Here is the claim that the gospel heralds had been speaking of Jesus as a King. And undoubtedly it is true that they had so spoken. This, then, shows His kingship and the proclamation of it.

"That Paul did speak of Messiah's glorious kingdom," write Conybeare and Howson, "the kingdom foretold in the prophetic Scriptures themselves, may be gathered by comparing together the Acts and the Epistles to the Thessalonians. The accusation brought against him (Acts xvii. 7) was that he was proclaiming another *king* and virtually rebelling against the emperor. And in strict conformity to this the Thessalonians are reminded of the exhortations and entreaties he gave them, when among them, that they would 'walk worthily of the God who had called them

to His *kingdom* and glory' (I Thess. ii. 12), and addressed as those who had 'suffered affliction for the sake of that *kingdom*' (II Thess. i. 5). Indeed, the *royal* state of Christ's second advent was one chief topic which was urgently enforced and deeply impressed on the minds of the Thessalonian converts. This subject tinges the whole atmosphere through which the aspect of this church is presented to us."

A kingdom must have its monarch. And we discover that the kingdom of God is no exception. Jesus Christ is its King. Even in the Acts the fact of His kingship is not left out. And we may further state that the Messiah's kingship is perpetual. He is to reign forever. This is not stated in the Acts along with the fact of His royalty; but it may not be out of place to cite a few Scriptures where the perpetuity of His reign is revealed. "His dominion is an everlasting dominion" (Dan. vii. 14). "He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever" (Luke i. 33). "But of the Son He saith, Thy throne,

O God, is forever and ever" (Heb. i. 8). "And He shall reign forever and ever" (Rev. xi. 15). These passages are sufficient to reveal to us that the kingship of Messiah mentioned in Acts is of eternal duration.

In Acts xiv. 22 is another important fact relative to the kingdom. It informs us of Paul and Barnabas "confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God."

Here we see the kingdom is something to be "entered." The kingdom, then, does not enter into the man, is not established in his heart, but the man is to enter into the kingdom. There is a vast difference between a kingdom's being entered by a man, and a man's being entered by a kingdom. The one is true and biblical. The other is untrue and unbiblical. The one is plain and sensible, while the other is absurd and preposterous.

In strict accord with this passage are

other passages of the Bible which mention the kingdom of God as a place to be entered. Let us note the words of Jesus recorded in Mark x. 23-25: "And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto His disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God. And the disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Again: Luke xiii. 24-29 brings us to the time of the second advent "when once the Master of the house is risen up," and shows us the patriarchs and prophets "in" the kingdom. Verses 28, 29 read: "There shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves cast forth without. And they shall come from the east and west, and

from the north and south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God." (See Matt. v. 20; vii. 21; xviii. 3; Luke xviii. 24, 25; John iii. 5.)

We may also observe from this utterance in the Acts that the disciples had not as yet entered into the kingdom. They were exhorted "to continue in the faith" and endure tribulation. They were already Christians, but they were *not* already in the kingdom. The entering there was future; it was to occur after the endurance of the "much tribulation."

This also is in agreement with other Scriptures. Thus Peter writes: "Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter i. 10, 11). The "entrance into the eternal kingdom was yet future even to them that had attained like precious faith with Peter.

The Messiah informs us that at His second advent, "when the Son of man shall come in His glory" and shall separate the people, "*then* shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. xxv. 34). The inheritance of the kingdom is not until He returns. But when at last He returns, "having received the kingdom" (Luke xix. 15), then he that overcomes will sit down with Him in His throne (Rev. iii. 21). Then the proper time having come that the saints are to possess the kingdom, they "shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever" (Dan. vii. 18, 22).

The thought also that the kingdom is to be entered through the suffering of "many tribulations" is expressed in other portions of the Bible. Paul writes to the Thessalonians about being "counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer" (II Thess. i. 5). In II

Tim. ii. 12 we read: "If we endure, we shall also *reign* with Him." (See also such passages as Rom. viii. 17; I Peter iv. 13; v. 10.) On the first of the texts above cited, Bishop C. J. Ellicott observes that the clause "contains no indirect assertion that sufferings establish a *claim* to the kingdom of God, but only confirms the idea elsewhere expressed in Scripture that they formed the *avenue* which led to it, and that the connection between holy suffering and future blessedness was mystically close and indissoluble."

Having paid our attention thus far to the kingdom as brought to view in the Acts, it may not be out of place to add some more general considerations of the subject. In pursuance thereof, it will be allowable to make mention of certain fanciful conceptions respecting the kingdom, viz., that the kingdom is established in the human heart, that it is the church, that it is Christianity, that it is the gospel dispensation. These are sometimes most flexibly blended one into another,

and oftentimes are vague, instinct and indefinite.

We desire kindly but vigorously to enter our biblical protest against the popular conception of a kingdom entering a man; or, more plainly, of God's kingdom being set up in the human heart. Mind, we are not protesting against the term "kingdom of grace;" not against the thought of a "mediatorial kingdom." We consider Christians as now being ruled by the Lord Jesus. We agree perfectly with Adam Clarke when he says: "Jesus Christ never saved a soul which He did not govern." We are glad to have "this man reign over us." But we do assert that the Bible never speaks of God's kingdom as being in the heart. And yet it is sadly true that such a meager and fanciful kingdom is the only one recognized by many modern Christians. The whole conception is erroneous.

But, thinks some one, you must have forgotten Luke xvii. 21. No, I have not. But a schoolboy ought to be able to dis-

cern that Jesus there was not speaking to His friends, but to His *enemies*, the skeptical Pharisees. And if God's kingdom was established in their hearts, it certainly had but little effect upon their lives. If in their hearts (and we say it both logically and reverently) it may likewise be in the hearts of "the devil and his angels." No; Jesus manifestly did not mean that the kingdom was "within" them as individuals, but rather that it was "within" or "in the midst of" them collectively, or as a body of people. And this was then true in the sense that He, the Messiah, the King, as an important factor of the kingdom and as representing it, was "within" or "in the midst of" them. (See E. H. Bickerteth; VanOosterzee, in Lange; Riddle, in Popular Comm.)

We may further say that the disciples did not mix the word "church" with the word "kingdom." That was left for later and uninspired men to do. The words in themselves are quite distinct from each other. Their significance is

widely different. Probably the thought of *ἐκκλησία* and *βασιλεία* as synonymous never occurred to the sacred writers. The "church of God" and the "kingdom of God" are not the same. Meyer says: "Certainly all who name Christ their Lord are under this King; but this is not His *βασιλεία*; *that* belongs to the future *αἰών*," (On Col. i. 13).*

We may yet further state that a kingdom is not a system of religion. When, in the Bible, we read of the kingdom of Og (Deut. iii. 4), of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan ii. 37), of Solomon (II Chron. i. 1), we never think that reference is made to the manner in which the kings worshiped. When mention is made of the kingdom of Egypt, (Ezra xxix. 14), of Israel (I Sam. xv. 28), of Ararat (Jer. li. 27), the thought conveyed is not one pertaining

* "Without doubt," says Prof. H. Lummis, "the kingdom of God and the church of God are in a few cases used figuratively, but even then one is not put for the other. And these figurative uses, fewer than in most words employed as many times, cannot militate against those cases which treat unmistakably of an objective kingdom in space and time and on earth."

to religion. The word "kingdom" then conveys to our minds its literal, everyday significance. When the sacred writers desire to mention any particular form of worship, any special religious system, they find no trouble in doing so. There is adequate language by which such things can be described. The worship of Baal, for instance, is never called the kingdom of Baal.

We may still further observe that a kingdom is not "the period during which a particular revelation of God's mind and will has been directly operative on mankind," if indeed, this is the sense in which the word "dispensation" is used in the term "gospel dispensation." A kingdom, surely, is not the period of time during which some economy is under operation. The "Mosaic dispensation" is a term frequently used. And yet, perhaps, none of us would think of calling that economy a kingdom. Yet it is doubtless as proper to designate that dispensation as a kingdom, as it is to call this present one a kingdom. The

kingdom of Israel came under the Mosaic economy, but was not itself that economy. The patriarchal dispensation was not a kingdom; the antediluvian dispensation was not a kingdom; and, just as surely, the gospel dispensation is not a kingdom.

When in the Scriptures we read such terms as the "kingdom of heaven," "kingdom of God," "kingdom of Christ," etc., we are not to suppose that kingdom here has some new, unheard-of and unnatural sense. "Kingdom of heaven" does not mean religion of heaven. "Kingdom of God" does not mean church of God. "Kingdom of Christ" does not mean Christianity or the gospel dispensation. If these terms *do* have such significance, the terms *themselves* do not convey it. For such meanings are foreign to the word "kingdom."

And yet it is a fact that many noble Christian writers, when they discourse of the kingdom of God, make it to mean simply the church, Christianity, etc. Its

regal, governmental and territorial aspect they almost entirely overlook. The actual meaning of the word kingdom does not apparently enter their thoughts. And yet—there is the word. Why should it be overlooked? Why should its primary import be wholly ignored? Why should a significance be attached to it which the term itself never has? Why has a word having such a distinct signification in ordinary usage, been used again and again in the Bible in a sense entirely at variance with its common definitions? We venture to say that it has not been so used, that when it occurs in the Bible it still retains decided vestiges of its obvious and natural import.

In the second chapter of Daniel, five kingdoms are spoken of. They are all called kingdoms. The first is represented by the golden portion of Nebuchadnezzar's image; the second by the silver; the third by the brass; the fourth by the iron; but the fifth by a stone becoming a mountain. By what system of consistent interpretation can

the first four kingdoms be made to mean kingdoms, and the fifth kingdom made to mean a religious system or a church? It would be just as consistent and logical to reverse this order, and call the first one a religious system and the other four actual kingdoms. The latter, however, is never done. It would be a little refreshing and fully as edifying if some interpreter would arise taking this position. It might at least set the other school thinking and show them their own marvelous inconsistency.

In the seventh chapter of Daniel these same five kingdoms are again presented to view. This time the first four are symbolized by four beasts. These beasts represent the literal kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia and Rome. As these monarchies are real kingdoms, why should the other kingdom brought to notice be made to mean a system of religion and not a kingdom? The only reason we know is because men would have it so; not because the language conveys that idea. A kingdom, how-

ever, is a kingdom. A religious system is a religious system. One is not the same as the other, and the terms are not synonymous and interchangeable.

The Romanist claims that the Latin church is the kingdom of God. The Mormon declares that the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is the kingdom of God and destined to fill the whole earth. The Protestant asserts that the true universal church is the kingdom of God. One has as good a right to the claim as the other, for all are alike laboring under mistaken ideas as to what constitutes a kingdom. No church is a kingdom in the proper sense of the word, and no kingdom is a church.

It seems to me that a complete kingdom presupposes a king, subjects, territory, principles, governmental administration, etc. As says Prof. H. Lummis: "A king, a realm, a multitude of subjects are requisite to a kingdom in the strict sense." And we see no reason whatever why the kingdom of God is not to be taken as an objective, literal real-

ity. We hold this to be the correct view, the view taught by the language of the Bible. And surely the language of the Bible ought to be taken into account.

All kingdoms, of course, are not exactly alike. There are differences in subjects, in monarch, in territorial extent, in form of administration, in position occupied, in power wielded, etc. But they all remain kingdoms. Now, as the kingdoms of men have differed one from another, no two being exactly alike, so, too, the kingdom of the God of heaven will evidently be found to have its own peculiar features. As being God's kingdom, while no less a literal kingdom, it would naturally have characteristics differing from all other kingdoms. And so we see that, as the first four kingdoms of Daniel differed one from the other, so likewise the fifth kingdom there mentioned, and which is identical with the kingdom of God spoken of in the book of Acts, differs from the rest. Its special characteristics are somewhat described.

It is a kingdom set up by the God of heaven. It is thus seen to be not of human origin, not brought about by human methods and for human ends. It is God's kingdom, the kingdom of Christ and of God. It is divine in its origin, supernatural in its revelation, and heavenly in its constitution.

This kingdom is to have a divine King. As we have already seen, the Lord Jesus, the Son and Anointed of God, is to be its eternal King. "The government shall be upon His shoulder. . . . Of the increase of His government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth even forever" (Isa. ix. 6, 7).

It is an enduring kingdom, one that "shall never be destroyed," that shall not come to an end. It is to be abidingly permanent, to endure unendingly. "It shall stand forever."

"His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His

kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." His "kingdom is an everlasting kingdom." "Of His kingdom there shall be no end." (See Dan. ii. 44; vii. 14, 27; Luke i. 33.)

It is to be a universal kingdom. It shall fill "the whole earth" (Dan. ii. 35.) "And the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms *under the whole heaven*, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High" (Dan. vii. 27.) This phrase "under the whole heaven," occurs also in the book of Job three times. Once it is used by (Job xxviii. 24), once by Elihu (xxxvii. 3), and once by God (xli. 11). If the term "under heaven," signifies on the earth, as it undoubtedly does, then "under the *whole* heaven" would signify on the *whole* earth or throughout the entire world. As used, then, in Dan. vii. 27, showing the territorial extent of the fifth monarchy, it would signify its world-wideness or universality.

Although Barnes takes an erroneous view as to the *nature* of the kingdom,

still we quote from him respecting its universality. He says that a "characteristic of this kingdom is that it will universally prevail. This was symbolized by the stone that 'became a great mountain, and that filled the whole earth' (verse 35). It is also implied, in the statement in verse 44, that it 'shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms.' They will cease, and this will occupy their places." Says Prof. H. Lummis: "The explanation of Daniel implies the forcible reduction of all other political power to nothing, and the occupation of absolutely universal world dominion."

The kingdom of God is to be inhabited by the saints, and by them alone. None but the righteous will be admitted there. As Paul said: "Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor ex-

tortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. vi. 9, 10.) And again: "For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicators, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, which is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (Eph. v. 5). On the other hand the King, in the day of judgment, will say to those on His right hand, "Inherit the kingdom." Then it is that "the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever" (Dan. vii. 18).

This kingdom will be a kingdom of peace, of plenty, of purity, of immortality. Everlasting joy shall be upon the heads of all who enter there. Other characteristics of this kingdom might be named, but we forbear. We have already passed the bounds of our province. Nevertheless we may say that, in the Acts, some important things concerning the kingdom of God have been remarked. In corroboration thereof we have brought other Scriptures to bear. And, more

fully to delineate the thought suggested by "entering" the kingdom, we have gone farther than was our original intention. Yet we have no excuses to offer. We fain would have entered into a more extended investigation of the subject. We trust that what we have said will set the reader to thinking and lead him to inquire and search after the truth of the matter.

The establishment of this kingdom in its universal and unfading glory will bring us to the unalterable eternal state. God grant that we may all, even if "through many tribulations," enter at last into the eternal kingdom of our God.

We have now completed our present task. We do not, however, purpose to recapitulate. We have examined the principal scriptural doctrines found in the book of Acts. Our task has not been an unpleasant one, and, we trust, not unprofitable. The consideration of the teachings of so important a portion of the Scripture ought to benefit both reader

and writer. Knowing that we have a Saviour who has died for our sins, been raised by the power of God for our justification, is the Mediator between God and men, who gives repentance and grants remission of sins unto them who believe, and is coming again to raise the dead and judge the world and establish the eternal and glorious kingdom—knowing these things, let us “take heed unto ourselves,” that finally we may “enter into the kingdom of God” and be given “an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.” Amen.

THE END.

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